



**CHILD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT FUND PLAN**  
**FOR**  
**FFY 2006-2007**

This Plan describes the CCDF program to be conducted by the State of Arkansas for the period 10/1/05 – 9/30/07. As provided for in the applicable statutes and regulations, the Lead Agency has the flexibility to modify this program at any time, including changing the options selected or described herein.

The official text of the applicable laws and regulations govern, and the Lead Agency acknowledges its responsibility to adhere to them regardless of the fact that, for purposes of simplicity and clarity, the specific provisions printed herein are sometimes paraphrases of, or excerpts and incomplete quotations from, the full text.

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Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 165 hours per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and reviewing the collection of information.

An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**(Form ACF 118 - Approved OMB Number: 0970-0114 expires 06-30-2008)**

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STATE PLAN FOR CCDF SERVICES  
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**AMENDMENTS LOG**

Child Care and Development Services Plan for  
For the period: 10/1/05 -- 9/30/07

SECTION AMENDED	EFFECTIVE/ PROPOSED EFFECTIVE DATE	DATE SUBMITTED TO ACF	DATE APPROVED BY ACF

**Instructions:**

- 1) Lead Agency completes the first 3 columns and sends a photocopy of this Log (showing the latest amendment sent to ACF) and the amended section(s) to the ACF Regional contact. A copy of the Log, showing the latest amendment pending in ACF, is retained in the Lead Agency's Plan.
- 2) ACF completes column 4 and returns a photocopy of the Log to the grantee.
- 3) The Lead Agency replaces this page in the Plan with the copy of the Log received from ACF showing the approval date.

**Note:** This process depends on repeated subsequent use of the same Log page over the life of the Plan. At any time the Log should reflect all amendments, both approved and pending in ACF. The Lead Agency is advised to retain those "old" plan pages that are superseded by amendments in a separate appendix to its Plan.

## **PART 1 - ADMINISTRATION**

The agency shown below has been designated by the Chief Executive Officer of the State (or Territory), to represent the State (or Territory) as the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency agrees to administer the program in accordance with applicable Federal laws and regulations and the provisions of this Plan, including the assurances and certifications appended hereto. (658D, 658E)

### **1.1 - Lead Agency Information** (as designated by State chief executive officer)

Name of Lead Agency: **Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services**

Address of Lead Agency: **P.O. Box 1437, Slot S-260  
Little Rock, AR 72203**

Name and Title of the Lead  
Agency's Chief Executive Officer: **John Selig, Director**

Phone Number: **501-682-8650**

Fax Number: **501-682-6836**

E-Mail Address: **John.Selig@arkansas.gov**

Web Address for Lead Agency (if any): **www.arkansas.gov/childcare**

### **1.2 - State Child Care (CCDF) Contact Information** (day-to-day contact)

Name of the State Child Care Contact (CCDF): **Tonya Russell, Director**

Title of State Child Care Contact: **Division of Child Care and  
Early Childhood Education**

Address: **P.O. Box 1437, Slot S-140  
Little Rock, AR 72203**

Phone Number: **501-682-4895**

Fax Number: **501-683-0971**

E-Mail Address: **Tonya.Russell@arkansas.gov**

Phone Number for child care subsidy program information (for the public) (if any):  
**501-682-8947**

Web Address for child care subsidy program information (for the public) (if any):  
**<http://www.accessarkansas.org/childcare/familysupport.html>**

### **1.3 - Estimated Funding**

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amounts will be available for child care services and related activities during the 1-year period: October 1, 2005 through September 30, 2006. (§98.13(a))

CCDF: **\$ 43,793,956**

Federal TANF Transfer to CCDF: **\$ 6,000,000**

Direct Federal TANF Spending on Child Care: **\$ 0**

State CCDF Maintenance of Effort Funds: **\$ 1,886,543**

State Matching Funds: **\$ 4,635,671**

Total Funds Available: **\$ 56,316,170**

### **1.4 - Estimated Administration Cost**

The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount (and percentage) of Federal CCDF and State Matching Funds will be used to administer the program (not to exceed 5 percent): **\$ 2,189,698 (5%)**. (658E(c)(3), §§98.13(a), 98.52)

### **1.5 - Administration of the Program**

Does the Lead Agency directly administer and implement all services, programs and activities funded under the CCDF Act, including those described in Part 5.1 – Activities & Services to Improve the Quality and Availability of Child Care, Quality Earmarks and Set-Aside?

- ☒ Yes. Skip questions 1.6 and 1.7. Go to Section 1.8.
- ☐ No, and the following describes how the Lead Agency maintains overall control when services or activities are provided through other agencies: (658D(b)(1)(A), §98.11)

### **1.6 - Determining Eligibility**

For child care services funded under §98.50 (e.g., certificates, vouchers, grants/contracts for slots based on individual eligibility), does the Lead Agency itself: (§98.11)

- Determine individual eligibility of non-TANF families?  
☐ Yes.  
☐ No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that determines eligibility of non-TANF families for child care:
- Determine individual eligibility of TANF families?  
☐ Yes.

- ☐ No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that determines eligibility of TANF families for child care:
- Assist parents in locating child care?  
☐ Yes.  
☐ No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that assists parents:
  - Make payments to providers and/or parents?  
☐ Yes.  
☐ No. If no, identify the name and type of agency that makes payments:

### **1.7 Non-Governmental Entities**

Is any entity named in response to section 1.6 a non-governmental entity? (658D(b), §§98.10(a), 98.11(a))

- ☐ Yes, and the following entities named in 1.6 are non-governmental:
- ☐ No.

### **1.8 Use of Private Donated Funds**

Will the Lead Agency use private donated funds to meet a part of the matching requirement of the CCDF pursuant to §98.53(e)(2) and (f)?

- ☐ Yes, The name and type of entity designated to receive private donated funds is:  
Name:  
Address:  
Contact:  
Type:
- ☒ No.

### **1.9 - Use of State Pre-Kindergarten (Pre-K) Expenditures for CCDF-Eligible Children**

1.9.1 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement?

- ☐ No.
- ☒ Yes,

X - The State assures that its level of effort in full day/full year child care services has not been reduced, pursuant to §98.53(h)(1).

20% - Estimated % of the MOE requirement that will be met with pre-K expenditures. (It may not exceed 20%.)

If the State uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the MOE requirement, the following describes how the State will coordinate its Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):

The State's quality Pre-K program, Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS), is licensed and contractually managed by the Lead Agency for the block grant. These Pre-K contracts are with several differing entities that include: local school districts, Regional Educational Service Cooperatives, Head Start grantees, community-based and faith-based non-profit organizations, universities, housing authorities, community development corporations, hospitals and the Economic Opportunity Corporation. These providers utilize a maximum income limit of 200% of Federal Poverty Level to determine eligibility for working families in this program. Many of the same providers participating in ABCSS also participate in the certificate program.

1.9.2 During this plan period, will State expenditures for Pre-K programs be used to meet any of the CCDF Matching Fund requirement? (§98.53(h))

☐

No.

☒

Yes, and

20% - Estimated % of the Matching Fund requirement will be met with pre-K expenditures. (It may not exceed 20%.)

If the State uses Pre-K expenditures to meet more than 10% of the Matching Fund requirement, the following describes how the State will coordinate its Pre-K and child care services to expand the availability of child care (§98.53(h)(4)):

As with MOE, the State's quality Pre-K program (Arkansas Better Chance for School Success-ABCSS) is licensed and contractually managed by the Lead Agency for the block grant. These Pre-K contracts are with several differing entities that include: Local School Districts, Regional Educational Service Cooperatives, Head Start Grantees, Community-Based and Faith-Based Non-Profit Organizations, Universities, Housing Authorities, Community Development Corporations, Hospitals and the Economic Opportunity Corporation. These providers utilize a maximum income limit of 200% of Federal Poverty Level to determine eligibility for working families in this



program. Many of the same providers participating in ABCSS also participate in the certificate program.

- 1.9.3 If the State answered yes to 1.91 or 1.9.2, the following describes State efforts to ensure that Pre-K programs meet the needs of working parents (§98.53(h)(2)):

### **State's Efforts to Ensure Pre-K Programs Meet Needs of Working Parents**

State funded Pre-K programs receive information about the child care voucher program to assist parents in provision of wrap-around services to extend hours of care for children of working families. Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS), the state-funded Pre-K program is mandated to provide service 178 days annually, 7.5 hours daily. Children of working parents may receive after-care in the same setting or may be transported by the program to another care program. ABCSS programs are encouraged to offer after-care and summer care to meet the needs of working families.

Action was taken by the 2005 Arkansas General Assembly to extend a 3% excise tax on package beer to provide financial support to the Pre-K program and to low-income working families through the child care voucher program. The excise tax is split with 80% supporting the Pre-K services and 20% to the child care voucher program for low-income working families.

Legislation for an increased appropriation for the public Pre-K program has been approved in both the 2003 and 2005 legislative sessions. This increased appropriation has resulted in an additional 7,000 children ages 3 and 4 being served in 2004-2005 and approximately 5,000 new children ages 3 and 4 added for the 2005-2006 program year. In light of a very tight state budget situation, we see the passage of this legislation as a clear sign of support by the legislature to support the needs of working families in Arkansas.

## **1.10 - Improper Payments**

### **1.10.1 How does the Lead Agency define improper payments?**

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education defines a child care overpayment as a payment made on behalf of a client or child care provider that the client or provider was ineligible to receive. While fraud is defined as receiving services or payments to which the client or provider is not entitled by willfully making a false statement, misrepresentation, or impersonation. Generally, overpayments that exceed \$500.00 or more will undergo a formal fraud investigation to determine if an intentional program violation has occurred on behalf of a client or provider.

Intentional program violations exist when the client or provider intentionally misrepresented or withheld information. Examples include:

- Misrepresents information by making false statements wither orally or in writing to obtain or attempt to obtain services or payments.

- Conceals information to obtain services or payments.
- Withholds information needed to determine eligibility.
- Fails to report a change in a timely manner or does not report a change in order to continue services.
- Falsifies or alters authorization documents to obtain services or payments.
- Misrepresents private paying rate information.

1.10.2 Has your State developed strategies to prevent measure, identify, reduce and/or collect improper payments? (§98.60(I), §98.65, §98.67)

☒ Yes and these strategies are:

1. Identify Suspicious Activity via Database Checks and Data Mining Techniques

The vast majority of our improper payment referrals are sent in for investigation by child care voucher caseworkers. This process of identifying suspicious activity is archaic and time consuming, and does not serve as a preventative mechanism to improper payments. Operating within the confines of current information technology systems, Arkansas is capable of doing database checks and data mining operations. However, its capability is limited due to the non-integration of the division's business information technology systems.

In light of these shortcomings, the division is aggressively developing a business intelligence system called Decision Support System (DSS). Data to be analyzed by DSS includes information from the following business systems:

- Child Care Eligibility System: The new child care eligibility system (called KIDCare) will be deployed on July 1, 2005 to administer the Child Care Assistance Program in Arkansas.
- Special Nutrition Program (SNP) System: This system is used by the division to administer the U.S. Department of Agriculture's food programs encompassing the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP); the Summer Food Service Program (SFSP); the National School Lunch Program (NSLP); and the Special Milk Program in Arkansas. The division will start development of an end-to-end SNP management information system starting in August of 2005.
- Child Care Licensing System (CLEAN): The division's licensing unit uses this system for all licensing actions in Arkansas.Recipient Overpayment Accounting System (ROAS): ROAS is used by the department's overpayment processing unit to track and monitor client overpayments.Exclusion Database: Used by the division for tracking provider exclusions and billing reviews.
- Child Outcome Planning and Assessment (COPA) System: COPA is used by the division for oversight and monitoring of the Arkansas Better Chance Programs..

DSS will serve two primary purposes. First, DSS will satisfy executive query and reporting needs and secondly, move from a reactive reporting mode to a more proactive predictive ability to assist the division in addressing suspicious provider and client behavior. The system will utilize commercial-off-the-shelf (COTS) software to be used in executive reporting and data mining needs.

- Business Objects was selected to meet the executive query and reporting needs. It provides an integrated query, reporting, and analysis capability to allow users to easily track, understand, and manage the information stored in multiple data sources within and beyond the division.
- SPSS Clementine was selected as the data mining software because it clearly demonstrated the advantage of having a user-friendly interface and good architectural design, while providing other industry-standard data mining features.

## 2. Fully Investigate Suspicious Activity

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education employs four full time staff members in its Compliance Unit to investigate and analyze provider and client suspicious activity. In addition, the division pays for two full-time fraud investigators, one full-time auditor, and one full-time attorney.

This team of professional and technical experts has the ultimate responsibility to ensure the proper administration of federal and state funds that pay for child care services for children, and to take measures to prevent and deter improper activity.

Over the past several years, this team has fully integrated all of its activities to provide for a more robust operation to address the difficult task of reducing improper payments. Many success stories have been documented as a result of hard work and dedication, and “lessons learned” from past experiences are being applied in current day-to-day practices to enhance the overall strategy being undertaken by the division

## 3. Quickly Act on the Results

Improper activity on behalf of providers and clients are quickly acted upon after a complete and thorough investigation. They include the following:

- Client Disqualifications: A disqualification period occurs when a client is found guilty of fraud or when the client fails to repay a child care overpayment within the established timeframes. Penalties imposed are six months for the first offense; one year for the second offense; and permanently disqualified for the third offense. Clients cannot be reinstated for child care assistance until all monies have been repaid.
- Provider Disqualification: A disqualification period occurs when a child care provider is found guilty of fraud or when the provider fails to repay a child care overpayment within the established timeframes. Additionally, child care providers can be disqualified for failing to submit an annual audit or if the Audit Office disapproves the findings of an

audit. Penalties imposed are one year for the first offense and permanently for the second offense. Like clients, all monies have to be repaid before a provider can become eligible to participate in the child care program.

- Provider Exclusion: Department policy allows for providers to be excluded from participation in all funded programs not as a penalty, but rather to protect public funds, the integrity of publicly funded programs, and public confidence in those programs. Provider exclusion is a serious action that shall be used only in the State's best interests. Exclusion applies to all participants, related parties, and the heirs and assigns of the participants and related parties.
- Child Care License Revocation: Falsification of any document or the submission of false information the division's licensing unit may constitute grounds for revocation of the license. Falsification means the submission of untrue information whether by statement or omission.
- Criminal Prosecution: Federal, state, and county prosecution are always available to be utilized in the most serious offenses.

☐ No. If no, are there plans underway to determine and implement such strategies?  
☐ Yes.  
☐ No.

1.10.3 Has your State developed strategies to identify errors in the determination of client eligibility?

☒ Yes, and these strategies are:

The State of Arkansas is actively participating in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Child Care Bureau's Initiative on detecting and preventing improper payments. As a part of that initiative, Arkansas is one of four states tasked to develop and test a methodology to compute a client eligibility error rate. The Child Care Bureau, with assistance from Walter R. McDonald and Associates, will analyze Arkansas' data to determine the following error rates:

- Child Error Rate—Number of eligibility errors per 1,000 cases;
- Payment Error Rate—Amount of money spent in error per \$1,000 in payments made; and
- Average Dollars Spent in Error per Child—Average amount of money spent in error per child.

In addition to the Bureau's initiative described above, Arkansas has analyzed provider, client, and administrative error rates since May of 2003. Although this effort primarily focused on low income family child care assistance, it did provide valuable data and insight for improving overall customer assistance; streamlining business operations where needed; revised child care policy and procedures; and identified emerging and futuristic requirements regarding information technology systems.

☐ No. If no, are there plans underway to determine and implement such strategies?

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☐ Yes.  
☐ No.

## PART 2 - DEVELOPING THE CHILD CARE PROGRAM

### **2.1 - Consultation and Coordination**

- 2.1.1 Lead Agencies are required to *consult* with appropriate agencies and *coordinate* with other Federal, State, local, tribal (if applicable) and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services (§98.12, §98.14(a),(b), §98.16(d)). Indicate the entities with which the Lead Agency has consulted or coordinated (as defined below), by checking the appropriate box(es) in the following table.

*Consultation* involves the participation of an appropriate agency in the development of the State Plan. At a minimum, Lead Agencies must consult with representatives of general purpose local governments (noted by the asterisk in the chart below).

*Coordination* involves the coordination of child care and early childhood development services, including efforts to coordinate across multiple entities, both public and private (for instance, in connection with a State Early Childhood Comprehensive System (SECCS) grant or infant-toddler initiative). At a minimum, Lead Agencies must coordinate with (1) other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and/or private agencies responsible for providing child care and early childhood development services, (2) public health (including the agency responsible for immunizations and programs that promote children's emotional and mental health), (3) employment services / workforce development, (4) public education, and (5) Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and (6) any Indian Tribes in the State receiving CCDF funds (noted by the asterisks in the chart below).

	<b>Consultation</b>	<b>Coordination</b>
• Representatives of local government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Indian Tribes/Tribal Organizations, when such entities exist within the boundaries of the State	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Other Federal, State, local, Tribal (if applicable), and private agencies providing child care and early childhood development services.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
• State/Tribal agency (agencies) responsible for		
○ Public health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ Employment services / workforce development	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ Public education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ TANF	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> *
○ State Pre-kindergarten Programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
○ Head Start programs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
○ Programs that promote inclusion for children with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Other (See guidance):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

\* *Required.*

For each box checked above, (a) identify the agency providing the service and (b) describe the consultation and coordination efforts, if any. Descriptions must be provided for any consultation or coordination required by statute or regulation.

2.1.2 State Plan for Early Childhood Program Coordination. *Good Start, Grow Smart* encourages States to develop a plan for coordination across early childhood programs. Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts in this area.

- ☐ **Planning.** Indicate whether steps are under way to develop a plan. If so, describe the time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
- ☐ **Developing.** A plan is being drafted. The draft is included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.
- ☐ **Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.
- ☐ **Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.
- ☒ **Other (describe):**

**Note:** A specific written plan is not in place. Numerous agreements and working partnerships are in place to ensure coordination across early childhood programs. The Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems planning effort will address coordination efforts along with a system wide approach to ensuring that all children are ready for school.

Describe the progress made by the State planning for coordination across early childhood programs since the date of submission of the 2004-2005 State Plan.

### **Building for the Future of Arkansas Children**

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education issued a Strategic Planning document in January of 2004. *Building for the Future of Arkansas Children* sets forth a beliefs-based management system that provides a comprehensive methodology for ensuring partnerships across numerous program areas affecting young children. Monthly reporting against benchmarks and quarterly updates ensure that the plan is being implemented with progress points being met. This plan crosses divisional and departmental boundaries and incorporates goals and activities of other departments, and organizations in the work of ensuring high quality early care and education for Arkansas Children. (See Attachment #1.)

### **Arkansas School Readiness Initiative Report**

The Arkansas School Readiness Initiative Report was issued in April of 2004. This was the work of a cross-discipline group looking at indicators of school readiness. As a part of a 17 state project, the Arkansas School Readiness Initiative Team developed *Getting Ready for School*:

*Children, Families, Schools, Communities.* The publication was released by the Governor during a press conference announcing the establishment of the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Planning Initiative. The indicators of school readiness for children, families, schools and communities will continue to be tracked annually to be used in making sound policy decisions. *Getting Ready for School: Children, Families, Schools, Communities* provides state wide data. *Getting Ready for School: Children, Families, Schools, Communities* is also available in a county format for each of the 75 Arkansas Counties. The state wide and county reports are available on the Division web site:

[www.arkansas.gov/childcare/schoolreadinessindex.html](http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/schoolreadinessindex.html)

### **Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (AECCS) Initiative**

The Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education administers the programmatic activities of the State Maternal and Child Health Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grants, funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The purpose of the initiative is to increase the health and well being of Arkansas' young children and their families by creating an integrated service delivery platform for all early childhood services. The AECCS is organized around five work groups representing areas of concern:

1. **Early Care and Education:** This work group is focusing on the matter of school readiness through quality early experiences, and is examining the possibility of a tiered quality strategy for early care settings. Components of quality that this group has identified include deliberate opportunities for cognitive, physical, social and emotional learning, parent involvement and education, attention to a child's physical (medical) needs, and links to community resources.
2. **Medical Homes:** This work group is addressing concerns of preventive health care for children, including access to a primary care physician, health insurance, early identification of developmental delays, and integration with community resources for referral. One of the primary efforts of this group is to convene a discussion that involves child care providers, parents and health professionals to confront some of the current barriers in the system.
3. **Family Support:** This work group seeks to coordinate efforts across the state to connect families with needed resources, empowering them to raise healthy families. Some of these services include home visiting programs, housing, adult education, marriage and family counseling, parenting education services, etc. One primary project is to develop a tool kit for parents to address the physical, social and emotional needs of their young children.
4. **Parent Education:** This work group is seeking to strengthen the coordination of parenting education opportunities across the state. A need for coordination statewide of such opportunities has been identified, and a plan is being developed to address the need. The group has also identified a need for sufficient credentials for parent educators, and exploring several possibilities to address the need. The Family Development Credential, a paraprofessional credential for frontline workers who work directly with families, is being studied for its appropriateness to address some of these needs in Arkansas.



**5. Social-Emotional Health:** This work group is working together with the Medical Homes work group to address the early identification of developmental delays. They are considering the possibility of identifying a recommended menu of screenings that could be made available to early care professionals.

Each work group has co-chairpersons that represent various state agencies, including the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Arkansas Department of Education, Arkansas Department of Education/Special Education, Schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Arkansas Centers for Effective Parenting, Arkansas Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY), and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. All work groups are working closely together, and have formed cross-cutting groups to support the work of the initiative. All groups are making recommendations to the Early Care and Education group to identify quality components in their specific area of concern.

Logic model is attached as Attachment #2.

Work groups will continue to meet to develop a comprehensive plan during the next year. After the plan is approved, a two-year implementation phase will follow.

Indicate whether there is an entity that is responsible for ensuring that such coordination occurs. Indicate the four or more early childhood programs and/or funding streams that are coordinated and describe the nature of the coordination.

#### **RESPONSIBLE ENTITY:**

##### **Arkansas Early Childhood Commission**

Coordination and collaboration are key factors in all planning and program implementation in Arkansas. The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission is the responsible entity for ensuring this coordination. The Commission is a governor-appointed group responsible for:

1. Advising the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education on the administration of the Arkansas Child Care Facilities Loan Guarantee Trust Fund;
2. Providing technical assistance in the design of training programs to enhance the skills of professionals in early childhood programs, including the development of an annual comprehensive training plan for providers;
3. Examining the recommendations of national and regional groups and systems producing scientifically proven and cost-effective results used by others to provide child care and early childhood services;
4. Assisting in the development of a comprehensive long-range plan for the expansion, development and implementation of early childhood programs in Arkansas, including recommending the allocation and expenditures of funds appropriated to the Arkansas Better Chance Program;

5. Facilitating coordination and communication among state agencies providing early childhood programs in order to promote non-duplication and coordination of services in such programs and recommending a structure for the administration of the currently existing programs and the recommended programs;
6. Advising the Department of Education and other appropriate state agencies on the development of programmatic standards for early childhood education programs to be funded with funds appropriated to the department or to such other state agencies as may receive appropriations for such purposes;
7. Promoting strong local community support for early childhood education programs;
8. Promoting public awareness of childcare and early childhood programs;
9. From the applications submitted, making Child Care Appeal Review Panel selections from persons who meet the qualifications for service and who exhibit a willingness and time commitment to serve on the panel; and
10. Approving all rules and regulations promulgated by the Division.

The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission is composed of eighteen (18) members, appointed by the Governor and subject to confirmation by the Senate.

## **COORDINATING AGENCIES:**

### **Arkansas Better Chance Program**

The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program is the state funded early care and education intervention program that is designed to serve children at risk of school failure. Programs may be either center-based or home-visiting based. Children must meet eligibility criteria and be between the ages of birth to school entry to receive services.

ABC programs must provide a 40% local match for participation. These matching funds come from a wide variety of programs such as:

- Head Start
- Early Head Start
- Local School Districts
- Even Start Programs
- Title I Funding
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Early Childhood Special Education Services (Part C)
- Early Intervention Services (Part H)
- Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP)

- Children's Health Management Services (CHMS)
- Poverty Index Funding
- Private Foundation Funds

The Arkansas Legislature established the ABC Program with Act 212 in 1991 and an appropriation of \$10 million. The ABC Task Force, comprised of 36 members representing a diversity of early childhood interests, convened in August 2001 to tackle quality issues. The "Core Quality Component Model" was the product of this effort. Higher standards in five major areas are addressed: low student to teacher ratio/well compensated staff; professional development; developmental screening; meaningful parent and community engagement activities, and; proven curricula and learning processes. The standards recommended by the Task Force have now been approved by the State Board of Education and are currently being implemented in programs statewide.

ABC programs are administered by several differing entities that include: Local School Districts (LEA's), Regional Educational Service Cooperatives, Head Start Grantees; Community Based Non-Profit Organizations (CBO), Universities, Housing Authorities, Community Development Corporations (CDC), Hospitals, and the Economic Opportunity Corporation (EOC). Coordination and collaboration is seen in all operations. The expected outcome is assurance that programs operate at a level of high quality and fiscal soundness to ensure high quality of early education for young children.

This program has continued to expand. In 2003, the Arkansas Legislature passed Act 49, giving birth to a dedicated state Pre-K program, Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS). The eligibility criterion for ABCSS is income-based only. Any three- or four-year old child whose family income was at or below 200% of Federal Poverty Level is eligible. The goal is to better prepare pre-K children in high-risk areas of the state for kindergarten. ABC and ABCSS served approximately 14,500 children in the 2004-2005 year. With an additional \$20 million appropriation from the Legislature in 2005, we anticipate an additional 4,000 children being served in the 2005-2006 year through ABC/ABCSS.

### **Public Health/Social and Emotional Health and Mental Health for Young Children**

The Division has established a collaborative workgroup around issues of children's mental health, dealing with challenging behaviors in young children and provision of professional development activities surrounding Social-Emotional Development in young children. Members of the collaborative include: Arkansas Head Start Collaborative; Arkansas Department of Education; Arkansas DHS/Division of Mental Health Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Division of Medical Services/Children's Medical Services; and private and public providers of children's mental health services. This group recommended the establishment of pilot sites to extend services to young children to include mental health, training for early educators in challenging behaviors, appropriate referrals for additional services and the availability of mental health professionals to offer services to children and families. Three projects were selected for two year pilots; these Community Mental Health Centers selected child care programs to partner with during the project timeframe. A partner for Inclusive Communities is the evaluator for these Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation projects. It

is hoped that the evaluative report will be the basis for additional program expansion to ensure mental health consultation services to early care programs throughout the state. The initial projects began in January of 2005 and will continue through December of 2006. The evaluation is for a 27 month period.

Maternal and Child Health Grant for Systems Development in Early Care and Education supports the work solidifying the early care and education framework across many state agencies, private and public providers of service. The Division serves as the program agency in partnership with the Arkansas Department of Health as Fiscal Agent. The planning grant will result in an implementation process to improve comprehensive services to children and families in Arkansas by: increasing access to medical homes; focusing on better mental health and social emotional development; supporting high quality child care and early childhood education and providing increased parent education and family support services.

The Director of the Division is a Governor-appointed member of the Comprehensive Adolescent Service System Plan (CASSP). This group directs the work of Mental Health Services and has a taskforce working on early childhood issues.

#### **Public Education (Arkansas Department of Education, Local Education Agencies-LEA's, Regional Educational Service Cooperatives)**

Coordination occurs between multiple programs in the Public Education sector and the Division. These include:

1. The Division administers the public pre-K program on behalf of the Department of Education. Funding for the Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program is included in the budget of the Department of Education. Through an agreement, the Division provides programmatic oversight of the ABC Program, reporting to the State Board of Education.
2. Programs operating under the ABC Program are managed by Local School Districts (LEA's), by Regional Educational Service Cooperatives and by Institutions of Higher Learning. These programs provide matching funds for the ABC program, which include Title I funds, Early Childhood Special Education funds (IDEA), Even Start and district poverty funding. Programs are collaborative in nature and ensure that high quality services are available to a broad number of children.
3. Coordination between the ABC Program and Even Start Programs includes site visits made jointly by staff from the Division and the Department of Education, joint reviews of grant and budget proposals and both programs require completion of Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation process for funding to be continued.
4. Development of the Kindergarten skills checklist and assessment was a joint project of the Department of Education, the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and the School Readiness Indicators Task Force. A Kindergarten Assessment tool was piloted in Fall of 2003 in thirty-six (36) local schools. The Assessment is based on the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Frameworks (Early Learning Guidelines), the Head Start Child Outcome Performance Indicators, HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) Outcomes, and the Arkansas Kindergarten Benchmarks. This Kindergarten

Assessment was required of all entering Kindergarten children beginning in the Fall of 2004. The Kindergarten teacher may accept assessments for children who have attended an ABC Program, Head Start Program or a State Accredited/Quality Approved program completed by the early childhood professional.

5. Pre K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas) contractors include Education Service Cooperatives, Local School Districts, and Universities.

### **TANF/DHS-Division of County Operations and Transitional Employment Board**

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education works closely with the Transitional Employment Assistance Board that was established by state law (§20-76-105) to oversee the management of the State's Temporary Employment Assistance (TEA) for Needy Families program. The Division updates the Board periodically with statistics and expenditure projections concerning child care services to families who are participating in or transitioning from welfare assistance. This Board has authority over the transfer of TANF funds. During the past two years they have approved the transfer of \$16.2 million dollars for subsidized child care services to ensure prioritized, subsidized child care services to those TEA and Transitional families. If a shortfall in revenue was to occur that would affect these services, the Division would work with the Board to consider options such as locating additional revenue, reducing monies budgeted for low-income working families, changing eligibility guidelines or co-payment levels.

Historically, the Division coordinated subsidized services with its sister Division – the Division of County Operations (DCO). The DCO was charged with the actual management of the TANF program for the State. Beginning in July 2005, the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education will assume case management and administrative responsibility for all subsidized child care, including TANF.

### **Head Start and Early Head Start**

Numerous Head Start Grantees participate and offer both child care voucher and ABC services to eligible children. The blending of these services provides a wide range of services to all children. ABC programs may serve children from birth to 5 years of age.

The Division serves as grantee for the Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Grant. Cooperation and coordination of services occurs at the state and local levels.

Arkansas Head Start Collaboration project has entered into a Memorandum of Agreement with the Community Action Agencies, the DHS/Division of County Operations, Community Action; and the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education to establish a statewide plan for partnerships concerning families and children. The first joint planning session was held in April of 2005. Work over the next two years will continue.

### **Programs that Promote Inclusion for Children with Disabilities**

In coordination with the Arkansas Department of Education/Early Childhood Special Education (part C/IDEA) office, children with special needs are served in Head Start, ABC and voucher programs. Additional services may be provided by local school districts or through the Regional Educational Services Cooperatives.

In coordination with Child Health Management Services (CHMS), intensive medical early intervention care is provided to children with special health care needs, ages six (6) months to four (4) years of age. This program results in individually designed programs of speech, occupational and physical therapy and provides parent education and support networks. All CHMS programs are licensed as child care settings, and the majority of programs meet the Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation standards.

Reimbursement for special needs is not subject to the county cap rate. The rates are individually set based on the needs of the child.

The Division Director serves on the Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention.

### **Project HELP**

Project Help is an outgrowth of the Arkansas National Infant/Toddler Child Care Initiative, sponsored by the national Zero to Three organization. The Arkansas team identified a need to provide a model for child care setting to access services for children with special needs whom they are serving. They partnered with North Hills Child Development Center in North Little Rock to pilot a program that provides early intervention services to child care centers in their own setting, therefore serving children in their least restricted environment. This project is ongoing, and a replication manual will provide other communities for a model for carrying out this strategy in their community.

### **Medical Homes and Social-Emotional Work Groups of the AECCS**

As part of the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (AECCS) Initiative, these two work groups are cooperating to develop a better system for identifying developmental delays as early as possible. They are currently studying the possibility of a standard format for screening and for open communication between a child's primary medical provider, family, and the caregivers other than the child's family.

### **Higher Education/Community Colleges, Technical Institutes, Four-Year Institutions, Department of Higher Education**

Thirty-two institutions of Higher Education are approved as Child Development Associate (CDA) Institutions. These approved institutions receive scholarship payments for eligible CDA students working in the early education field. Representatives from Higher Education

institutions serve on the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System. A steering committee for Higher Education articulation and professional development meets regularly. This group continues to work towards ensuring smooth articulation agreements between all institutions of higher education. The Technical Institutes and Community Colleges form a strong base of training sites for early care educators and deliver both certificate and credential programs in the area of early care and education. Efforts are in place to establish a procedure to increase student success through increasing the pre-requisite for scholarship, developing a career advising process and requiring additional support from the; program directors.

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education serves as convener for the National Association for the Education of Young Children's (NAEYC) sponsored project for accreditation for two year institutions of higher education. This pilot project provides support fort community colleges to "test" the two year accreditation materials leading to National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education (NCATE) for four year institutions. This project will assist in work towards articulation agreements.

### **Arkansas Department of Workforce Education**

The Department of Workforce Education and the Department of Labor continue to partner with the Division in the expansion and support of the Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Program (ACCAP). Seven CDA Institutions are approved Child Care Apprenticeship Instructional Sites. These sites also house Teacher Learning Centers available to all early care providers in the community. Additional Apprenticeship instructional sites will be developed.

### **Arkansas Department of Economic Development**

Funds for renovation and construction of child care facilities are made available through the Arkansas Department of Economic Development through a partnership with the Division. All child care construction projects receive preliminary review and approval by the Division prior to consideration for funding through the Community Development Block Grant at the Department of Economic Development. It is projected that four (4) to five (5) projects will be approved annually. The total funds available on an annual basis are \$900,000.

### **Arkansas Finance Development Authority**

Child Care Loans are available through a joint project with the Arkansas Finance Development Authority. ADFA provides capitol for child care projects and requests a review by the Division for viability.

### **Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families**

Partnerships exist between Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families and the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education in several areas. The main focus over the coming two years will be supporting the Arkansas Out of School Network (AOSN) and the work of the group in sponsoring a Governor's Summit on Extra Learning Opportunities (ELO's). The Division partnering with the AOSN submitted a grant proposal to the National Governors Association for funding to sponsor the summit. The AOSN proposes to resubmit a grant application to the Mott Foundation to support expansion of the AOSN.

Arkansas Advocates was instrumental in supporting legislation to expand the public pre K program in Arkansas. As a co-collaborator with the Arkansas Early Childhood Association they served as the messengers of the need for high quality early care and education for young children. The collaborative group INVEST EARLY will continue as a partnership.

### **Arkansas Child Care Resource and Referral (ACCR&R) Network**

Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies work in coordination with the Division in several projects:

1. The Governor's Family Friendly Employer Initiative steering committee has a representative from the ACCR&R Network. The local CCR&R's are actively involved in increased business participation in their communities.
2. The Division meets with the local CCR&R staff on a quarterly basis to ensure consistency in service delivery. This has resulted in development of "new baby" boxes, used by the R&R to recruit business participation by offering the boxes to new parents.
3. The four local CCR&R agencies assist the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education in conducting annual market rate surveys. Each agency makes personal contact with all licensed and registered child care providers in their designated areas to obtain current child care rates. The un-served counties (those counties without a local CCR&R office) are divided between the local CCR&R's. This ensures a personal contact with all licensed and registered child care providers. The information is transferred to the Division electronically. The most recent coordination effort resulted in 75% licensed and registered providers rates being considered. This results exceeded historical data by 20-25%. Data from the 2005 survey is still pending.
4. Three additional areas of the state will be covered by CCR&R agencies beginning July 2005. This will include the addition of two newly established CCR&R agencies.
5. CHILDREN of North Central Arkansas has been recognized as meeting the accreditation standards of Child Care Aware. Two other CCR&R agencies have made application for this recognition and expect approval within the next year. Newly established CCR&R's will be making application for accreditation within their second year of operation.

### **Registered Child Care Apprenticeship Programs/Teacher Learning Centers**

The Division provides staff to the Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Committee. This group provides guidance to the seven registered apprenticeship sites in the state. Coordination of



extending teacher-training opportunities has occurred through the establishment of Teacher Learning Centers (TLC). The Division plans to continue monetary support for these Learning Centers in a cooperative move to support expansion of the Child Care Apprenticeship model in Arkansas.

Describe the **results** or expected results of this coordination. Discuss how these results relate to the development and implementation of the State's early learning guidelines, plans for professional development, and outcomes for children.

1. The Arkansas School Readiness Initiative Report was issued in April of 2004. This was the work of a cross-discipline group looking at indicators of school readiness. As a part of a 17 state project, the Arkansas School Readiness Initiative Team developed Getting Ready for School: Children, Families, Schools, Communities. The publication was released by the Governor during a press conference announcing the establishment of the AR Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Planning Initiative. The indicators of school readiness for children, families, schools and communities will continue to be tracked annually to be used in making sound policy decisions. Getting Ready for School: Children, Families, schools, Communities provides state wide data. Additionally, Getting Ready for School: Children, Families, Schools, Communities is also available in a county format for each of the 75 Arkansas Counties. The state wide and county reports are available on the Division web site:

[www.arkansas.gov/childcare/schoolreadinessindex.html](http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/schoolreadinessindex.html)

2. Coordination between the ABC Programs and Even Start Programs includes site visits made jointly by staff from the Division and the Department of Education, joint reviews of grant and budget proposals and both programs require completion of Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation process for funding to be continued.

3. Development of the Kindergarten skills checklist and assessment was a joint project of the Department of Education, the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and the School Readiness Indicators task force. A Kindergarten Assessment tool was piloted in fall of 2003 in thirty-six (36) local schools. The Assessment is based on the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Frameworks (Early Learning Guidelines), the Head Start Child Outcome Performance Indicators, HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) outcomes and the Arkansas Kindergarten Benchmarks. The Kindergarten Assessment was required of all entering Kindergarten children beginning in fall of 2004. The Kindergarten teacher may accept assessments for children who have attended an ABC program, Head Start program or a State Accredited/Quality Approved program completed by the early childhood professional.

4. The Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System is fully operational. This group is responsible for directing the professional development initiatives in Arkansas. A Steering Committee provides oversight for the continuing work of increasing professional development.

5. Professional development opportunities that are available to child care providers in Arkansas are listed in the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System SPECTRUM

(career lattice). The SPECTRUM details ten levels of career development based on training, education, experience in the field and professional activity. The SPECTRUM plots a course for any individual developing a plan for professional growth in early care and education. These opportunities range from levels, Basic to Intermediate to Advanced.

- The Basic Level of training opportunities is for those practitioners who are developing an understanding and/or beginning to seek knowledge and skills in the early care and education profession. This level includes the Awareness and Orientation levels. Specific training opportunities include an Introduction to Child Care and Pre-Employment, Introduction Early Care and Education (40 Clock Hours), Child Care Orientation Training (20 Clock Hours), Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Orientation (18 Clock Hours), Family Child Care Orientation Training (8 Clock Hours) and Secondary Child Guidance, Management and Services (140 to 180 Clock Hours)
- The Intermediate Level is for practitioners who are frequently and/or consistently seeking knowledge and skills. This level includes the Certificate, Credential, Endorsement, and Technical Document levels. In the Certificate level the training opportunities are Caregiver Certificate, Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Certificate (60 Clock Hours), Child Care Specialist Certificate (60 Clock Hours), and Best Care (10 Clock Hours). In the Credential level is the Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Certificate (minimum 144 clock hours per year and a minimum of 2000 and up to 4000 on-the-job hours. Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Credential (60 Clock Hours), Child Development Associate (120 Clock Hours) and the NAFCC Accreditation (90 Clock Hours) are available to practitioners. The Endorsement level includes Child Care Curriculum Endorsement (135 Clock Hours), Mentor Endorsement (45 Clock Hours) and Pre-K Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas Endorsement (30 Clock Hours). The Technical Document gives opportunities provided by colleges that include Certificate of Proficiency (9 to 15 Credit Hours), Technical Certificate (24 to 30 Credit Hours) and Technical Diploma (CDA Credential and 27 Credit Hours).

6. Credentials are offered for the following: Director Credentials, Infant-Toddler Credentials, School-Age Credentials and Family Child Care Homes. CEU's or College Credit is offered with all training on the SPECTRUM.

7. Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas): The Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, and the Head Start Collaboration Project joined together to develop a training program that addresses the issue of pre-literacy skills. What emerged was the *Pre-K Early Learning Literacy in Arkansas Initiative* (Pre-K ELLA). This is a comprehensive, five-day training designed for all early education settings, including center-based care, family child care homes, and professionals working with parents in the *Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-School Youngsters* (HIPPY) program. The joint efforts of all concerned resulted in this 30 hour comprehensive training through use of CCDF quality funds the Division assures the training is delivered free of charge all across the state, in Arkansas universities, community colleges and technical institutes.

Describe how the State's plan supports or will support continued coordination among the programs. Are changes anticipated in the plan?

1. With the projected finalization of an Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Plan by the Summer of 2006, adjustments may occur that will support continued coordination among the numerous early care and education programs. They include the following:

- a. Early Care and Education: This work group is focusing on the matter of school readiness through quality early experiences, and is examining the possibility of a tiered quality strategy for early care settings. Components of quality that this group has identified include deliberate opportunities for cognitive, physical, social and emotional learning, parent involvement and education, attention to a child's physical (medical) needs, and links to community resources.
- b. Medical Homes: This work group is addressing concerns of preventive health care for children, including access to a primary care physician, health insurance, early identification of developmental delays, and integration with community resources for referral. One of the primary efforts of this group is to convene a discussion that involves child care providers, parents and health professionals to confront some of the current barriers in the system.
- c. Family Support: This work group seeks to coordinate efforts across the state to connect families with needed resources, empowering them to raise healthy families. Some of these services include home visiting programs, housing, adult education, marriage and family counseling, parenting education services, etc. One primary project is to develop a tool kit for parents to address the physical, social and emotional needs of their young children.
- d. Parent Education: This work group is seeking to strengthen the coordination of parenting education opportunities across the state. A need for coordination statewide of such opportunities has been identified, and a plan is being developed to address the need. The group has also identified a need for sufficient credentials for parent educators, and exploring several possibilities to address the need. The Family Development Credential, a paraprofessional credential for frontline workers who work directly with families, is being studied for its appropriateness to address some of these needs in Arkansas.
- e. Social-Emotional Health: This work group is working together with the Medical Homes work group to address the early identification of developmental delays. They are considering the possibility of identifying a recommended menu of screenings that could be made available to early care professionals.

## **2.2 - Public Hearing Process**

Describe the Statewide public hearing process held to provide the public an opportunity to comment on the provision of child care services under this Plan. (658D(b)(1)(C), §98.14(c)) At a minimum, the description must provide:

Date(s) of statewide notice of public hearing: **July 3-5, 2005**

Manner of notifying the public about the statewide hearing: **Newspaper advertisements, E-mail announcements, Websites**

Date(s) of public hearing(s): **July 26, 2005**

Hearing site(s): **Little Rock, Arkansas**

How the content of the plan was made available to the public in advance of the public hearing(s): **Hearing notice advised public they could obtain copy of plan by writing or calling the Division office. A copy of the State Plan was also available on the Division website.**

**A brief summary of the public comments from this process will be included as an amendment upon completion of all public hearing.**

### **2.3 - Public-Private Partnerships**

Describe (1) the activities, including planned activities, to encourage public-private partnerships that promote private-sector involvement in meeting child care needs, and (2) the results or expected results of these activities. (658D(b)(1), §98.16(d))

#### **Governor's Family Friendly Employer Initiative and State Wide Awards (Attachment #3)**

The first Governor's Family Friendly Employer Awards were presented on March 19, 2003. This was the result of a recommendation made by the Arkansas Corporate Champions for Children Task Force in August 2000 to recognize Arkansas employers for establishing and providing resources that support employees in balancing the needs of both work and family. This initiative has become an annual award event with the most recent being held April 13, 2005. The Initiative has the following goals:

- Recognize employers in Arkansas that have demonstrated a commitment to policies and practices that address work-life balance.
- Use the survey of nominees to gather comprehensive information about how Arkansas employers address work-life balance.
- Distribute business-oriented child care resource guides and information on programs and policies considered best practices, which could be used as models for replication.

An advisory committee made up of a representative from each of the following partners directs the Arkansas Governor's Family-Friendly Employer Initiatives:

- Office of the Governor
- Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families
- Arkansas Business Publishing Group

- Arkansas Child Care Resource and Referral Network
- Arkansas Department of Economic Development
- Arkansas Department of Education
- Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services
  - Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
  - Division of County Operations
- Arkansas Department of Workforce Education
- Arkansas Department of Higher Education
- Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce & Associated Industries of Arkansas
- Arkansas Society of Human Resource Managers
- Arkansas State University

The Division serves as the lead agency in funding and implementation of the Initiative through an out-source agreement with Arkansas State University.

A panel of eleven (11) judges makes selections. The first awards ceremony was held in March of 2003 and honored eleven (11) employers as gold, silver and bronze winners in differing sizes of businesses and an overall Diamond winner. It is anticipated that this Initiative will continue to expand and increase business participation in work-life issues. The most recent awards ceremony was held on April 13, 2005.

### **Child Care Resource and Referral (Local Networks)**

Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies (CHILDREN of North Central Arkansas and REACH of Northeast Arkansas) both have active outreach and cooperation from the business community. Both receive financial backing and have business and Chamber of Commerce representatives serving on their Boards. These CCR&R's receive support both financially and from CEO levels to continue the work of the R&R locally.

Child Care Resource and Referral agencies also collaborate with local United Way organizations to support Success by Six projects. Two agencies have been recipients of the Success by Six projects; one is a current site.

CHILDREN of North Central Arkansas is partnering with other business in the Independence County area to sponsor Imagination Library, the foundation sponsored by Dolly Parton that provides a book a month to children from birth to age 5. This effort reflects public and private donations and is in cooperation with United Way of Batesville.

### **Arkansas Department of Economic Development/Community Development Block Grant**

A partnership with the Arkansas Department of Economic Development for distribution of \$900,000 in Community Development Block Grant funds for renovation/construction of child care facilities places the Division in a position of assisting county and local governments during planning stages of determining whether child care is necessary in the community. This involves

local business and establishes a strong public-private partnership in increasing capacity of childcare opportunities in many areas of the state.

### **School Readiness Indicators Initiative-Making Progress for Children**

This is a joint project managed by Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families (a non-profit advocacy group) and the Division. This Initiative encompasses representatives from Higher Education, Department of Education, Department of Health and Human Services, Head Start, Arkansas Children's Hospital, University of Arkansas Children's Data Center, Early Childhood Professionals, parents, teachers and school administrators, working together to develop indicators of school readiness. The major focus has been on indicators of readiness for children, for families and communities and for schools. The identification of these specific indicators will allow the state to develop policy changes to address the areas that need improvement. A group of four (4) national foundations support this effort that includes seventeen (17). The results of the collaborative effort was presented by the Governor in a press conference in April of 2004, the national report was released in February of 2005. Arkansas continues to track and report on the identified indicators in our report "Getting Ready for School: Children, Families, Schools, Communities. The publication is available as a state report and reports are prepared for each of our 75 counties. All publications are available at:

[www.arkansas.gov/chldcare/schoolreadinessindex.html](http://www.arkansas.gov/chldcare/schoolreadinessindex.html)

### **Arkansas Children's Week (Attachment #4 and 5)**

Children's Week events planned at the state level with input from early childhood professionals across the state and are locally supported. Each year a theme is developed for the week. Teacher guidance and activity books, a series of state sponsored training sessions in twenty (20) locations throughout the state and massive public information are shared during the week. The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission sponsors the Outstanding Early Childhood Professional Awards each year, selecting from nominations made by professionals, parents and the general public. These persons are honored for their service to the state on behalf of young children.

### **Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce and Affiliated Industries Association Tyson/Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families**

The Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce and Affiliated Industries Association partnering with Tyson and Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families developed a public awareness campaign for parents about the public Pre K funds available in Arkansas for children in families up to 200% of Federal Poverty Level. This campaign also provided information regarding other sources for subsidized child care such as Head Start and Vouchers for low-income working families.

### **Child Care Apprenticeship**

The Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Program (ACCAP) enlists child care programs as active partners in working with child care apprentices. The child care provider agrees to support and have a trained staff member serve as a journey-worker/mentor for the student during their on-the-job training portion of class work. The apprentice is guaranteed salary increases for completion of related instruction and hours of on-the-job training. The programs are approved by the U.S. Department of Labor and at completion are awarded a Child Development Specialist Certificate that is nationally recognized. This program assures students of on-the-job training that is supervised by a trained mentor, an increase in their compensation based on additional training and in turn reduces staff turnover and provides well-trained staff for employers.

### **Early Care and Education Trust Fund**

State Statute allows for the establishment of an Early Care and Education Trust Fund. The fund would incorporate donations from business and private entities with matching funds from the state. Funds would then be available within local communities to expand and support early care and education programming. Rules and Regulations for the procedural aspects of this fund are to be developed.

### **Strengthening Families Initiative (Attachment #6)**

Arkansas is one of seven states to be selected through a nationwide Request for Proposal (RFP) Process to pilot a new, proven, cost-effective strategy to prevent child abuse and neglect. The strategy involves early childhood settings working with families to build protective factors around children. The convening partners of the initiative are two Division of the Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and the Division of Children and Family Services. Arkansas Strengthening Families is a collaborative initiative bringing together 23 partners organizations and state agencies from the child welfare, child abuse preventions and early childhood fields as well as parents and community leaders. The initiative is combined with the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (AECCS) Initiative in a joint leadership team, as part of systemic effort to increase the quality of care for Arkansas' children. It will seek to build a network of early care and education programs in the state that model a shift from focusing on risk factors to focusing on building protective factors and strengthening families as a strategy to prevent child abuse and neglect. Over the next two years (January 2005 – December 2006), partners will lay the foundation or work that is self-sustaining and institutionalized across systems.

## **PART 3 - CHILD CARE SERVICES OFFERED**

### **3.1 - Description of Child Care Services**

#### **3.1.1 Certificate Payment System**

Effective July 1, 2005, the Division of Childcare and Early Childhood Education is using a new computer system to determine eligibility for all childcare programs in the state of Arkansas. In the old system, separate Certificate of Authorizations and Worksheets were mailed to the childcare providers notifying them of the information needed to be able to bill for childcare on authorized children.

In this new system, named KIDCare, the Certificate of Authorization and the Worksheet are now one form that is mailed directly to the provider from our Central Office. The Certificate of Authorization shows the name and addresses of the childcare facility, with the facility number and Tax ID number. Additional information allows the provider to know which child to be able to bill and includes information pertinent to that child, such as the authorization period, service type, fees, and federal reporting information such as race, sex and age type.

Applicants are informed during the interview process the requirements that allow them to choose childcare providers as well as how to switch providers. If the applicant needs assistance in choosing a provider, the childcare eligibility specialist assists by giving the applicant a list of providers for their area that accepts voucher payments. The caseworker is not allowed to choose the provider for the applicant. Per childcare policy, the applicant is given the opportunity to locate a provider. If, with caseworker assistance, a provider cannot be located, eligibility would be denied.

The applicant is notified during the application process that they can change daycare providers at any time. They are informed that they need to notify their caseworker at least seven days in advance that they wish to change providers. If they do not give their eligibility specialist advance notice, the case head would be subject to paying the new provider the private pay rate until the paperwork is processed. Special circumstances are taken into consideration that allows the eligibility specialist the opportunity to waive the seven day advance notice requirement. Such circumstances include but are not limited to facility closures and child maltreatment.

Describe the overall child care certificate process, including, at a minimum:

(1) a description of the form of the certificate (98.16(k));

The Certificate of Authorization contains the child's name, parent's name, the days of the week and the time authorized, the beginning and end dates authorized, the name and, license or registration number of the provider that has been selected by the parent. This Certificate can be given to the parent to carry to the provider but normally will be mailed or faxed to the child care provider. (*See ATTACHMENT #7.*)



(2) a description of how the certificate program permits parents to choose from a variety of child care settings by explaining how a parent moves from receipt of the certificate to choice of the provider; (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii), 658P(2), 98.2, 98.30(c)(4) & (e)(1) & (2)) and

Upon meeting all eligibility requirements, if the parent does not have a provider selected, they are given a list of vendors that includes those accepting certificates. This listing is accessible by the DHS staff either on-line or by a hard copy printed monthly. The listing is also available on the Division's web-site.

If the parent has selected a licensed or registered provider who is not a participant in the Child Care System, a participation agreement is sent to the provider. If the provider chooses to participate, they can be enrolled in the program within a week to ten days.

If the parent chooses a relative provider who has not yet enrolled in the program, a pre-application form will be given to the provider. If the pre-application is completed and returned within ten (10) days, a minimum of information will be gathered which will allow services and payment to begin immediately. The full application must be completed within sixty (60) days after the child begins receiving care. The full application requires a health card, criminal records check, a child abuse central registry check, and a checklist that verifies the health and safety of the child care site.

All types of child care providers participate in the Child Care System. However, they must be licensed or registered with the state: Child Care Centers, Licensed Child Care Family Homes, Registered Homes and Relative/In-home care are available to the family in each county. Providers may enroll in the program at any time.

(3) if the Lead Agency is also providing child care services through grants and contracts, estimate the mix of §98.50 services available through certificates versus grants/contracts, and explain how it ensures that parents offered child care services are given the option of receiving a child care certificate. (98.30(a) & (b)) This may be expressed in terms of dollars, number of slots, or percentages of services.

Nothing in the specialized grant precludes a recipient from accessing child care certificates in every county of the state.

3.1.2 In addition to offering certificates, does the Lead Agency also have grants or contracts for child care slots?

☒ Yes, and the following describes the types of child care services, the process for accessing grants or contracts, and the range of providers that will be available through grants or contracts: (658A(b)(1), 658P(4), §§98.16(g)(1), 98.30(a)(1) & (b))

Specialized Child Care Grants are utilized for child care services for low-income working families to access high quality care through the Arkansas Better Chance programs in Arkansas. Any licensed provider (for-profit, non-profit and faith-

based provider) meeting the ABC criteria and Quality Approval/Accreditation standards could participate in this program.

For the FFY 2004-2005 program years, State Match funds totaling \$1,267,076 are dedicated to these grants. The specialized child care grants will provide funding for 422 children who meet the eligibility for both voucher-care and the Arkansas Better Chance program.

☐ No.

3.1.3 The Lead Agency must allow for in-home care but may limit its use. Does the Lead Agency limit the use of in-home care in any way?

☒ Yes, and the limits and the reasons for those limits are: (§§98.16(g)(2), 98.30(e)(1)(iv))

Since Federal Regulations require that in-home caretakers be paid a minimum wage, there must be enough children receiving child care times the daily rate to insure the provider is paid minimum wage. For example: minimum wage is \$5.15 per hour. The daily maximum for nine hours would be \$46.35. If the daily rate was \$12.00 per child, there must be at least four children receiving vouchers to equal minimum wage.

☐ No.

3.1.4 Are all of the child care services described in 3.1.1 above (including certificates) offered throughout the State? (658E(a), §98.16(g)(3))

☒ Yes.

☐ No, and the following are the localities (political subdivisions) and the services that are not offered:

### **3.2 - Payment Rates for the Provision of Child Care**

The statute at 658E(c)(4) and the regulations at §98.43(b)(1) require the Lead Agency to establish payment rates for child care services that ensure eligible children equal access to comparable care.

These rates are provided as **Attachment 8**.

The attached payment rates were or will be effective as of **July 1, 2003**.

The following is a summary of the facts relied on by the State to determine that the attached rates are sufficient to ensure equal access to comparable child care services provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive child care assistance under the CCDF and other governmental programs. Include, at a minimum:

The month and year when the local market rate survey(s) was completed: April of 2005. (§98.43(b)(2))

A copy of the Market Rate Survey instrument and a summary of the results of the survey are provided as Attachment 9.

- How the payment rates are adequate to ensure equal access based on the results of the above noted local market rate survey (i.e., the relationship between the attached payment rates and the market rates observed in the survey): (§98.43(b))

Four Child Care Resource and Referral agencies are contracted in February of each year to survey every licensed and registered caregiver in the state concerning rates. Rate caps are established based on the age of the child, the provider type and the type of service furnished. There is a separate rate cap for each type of care for each of the 75 counties in the state. Provider rates are then applied to a 75th percentile formula which allows child care to be purchased in at least 75% of the child care providers in the county at the market rate for that type of care and for that particular age child. Rate caps will not change at this time.

The Agency stabilizes rates to insure that Infant/Toddler rate caps are higher than or equal to preschool rates and School Age rates are equal to or less than Preschool Rates in centers. Licensed Child Care Family Homes are equal to or less than Center-based rates. Registered and Relative Rates are equal to or less than the Licensed Homes. The purpose for stabilizing the rates is to ensure equity based on licensing requirements for different types of providers.

- Additional facts that the Lead Agency relies on to determine that its payment rates ensure equal access include: (§98.43(d))

Rates are collected from Licensed Child Care Centers, Licensed Child Care Family Homes, Registered Family Homes and Relative/In-Home Care Givers. Additional Licensed or Registered child care providers may sign up to participate in the state's program at anytime during the year. Providers who participate in the state's program are placed on a list that is made available to parents who are looking for a child care provider that accepts vouchers. Thereby parents are given a wide range of choices in the types of providers available.

- If the payment rates do not reflect individual rates for the full range of providers -- center-based, group home, family and in-home care -- explain how the choice of the full range of providers is made available to parents.

Payment rates are collected from all types of providers except group homes since Arkansas does not license group homes. Parents can choose from Licensed Child Care Centers or Child Care Family Homes, Registered Homes or Relative/In-home Providers.

- At what percentile of the current Market Rate Survey is the State rate ceiling set? If it varies across categories of care, please describe.

Rate ceiling is set at the 75th percentile.

- Does the State have a tiered reimbursement system (higher rates for child care centers and family child care homes that achieve one or more levels of quality beyond basic licensing requirements)?

☐ Yes. If yes, describe:  
☒ No.

### **3.3 - Eligibility Criteria for Child Care**

3.3.1 Complete column (a) and (b) in the matrix below. Complete Column (c) ONLY IF the Lead Agency is using income eligibility limits lower than 85% of the SMI).

Family Size	(a) 100% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month)	(b) 85% of State Median Income (SMI) (\$/month) [Multiply (a) by 0.85]	IF APPLICABLE	
			(c) Income Level, lower than 85% SMI, if used to limit eligibility	
			(d) \$/month	(e) % of SMI [Divide (d) by (a), multiply by 100]
1	25,767	21,902	15,460	60%
2	33,695	28,640	20,217	60%
3	41,623	35,379	24,974	60%
4	49,551	42,118	29,731	60%
5	57,479	48,857	34,487	60%

If the Lead Agency does not use the SMI from the most current year, indicate the year used: **Most current**

If applicable, the date on which the eligibility limits detailed in column (c) became or will become effective: **July 1, 2005**

- 3.3.2 How does the Lead Agency define “income” for the purposes of eligibility? Is any income deducted or excluded from total family income, for instance, work or medical expenses; child support paid to, or received from, other households; Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments? Is the income of all family members included, or is the income of certain family members living in the household excluded? Please describe and/or include information as **Attachment 10.** (§§98.16(g)(5), 98.20(b))

Attachment 10 is a copy of the Subsidized Child Care Policy Manual. This policy details the definitions asked for in 3.3.2, as well as outlines the conditions under which certain income may be deducted or excluded.

- 3.3.3 Has the Lead Agency established additional eligibility conditions or priority rules, for example, income limits that vary in different parts of the State, special eligibility for families receiving TANF, or eligibility that differs for families that include a child with special needs? (658E(c)(3)(B), §98.16(g)(5), §98.20(b))

☐ Yes, and the additional eligibility criteria are: (Terms must be defined in Appendix 2)

☒ No.

- 3.3.4 Has the Lead Agency elected to waive, on a case-by-case basis, the fee and income eligibility requirements for cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services, as defined in Appendix 2? (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3)(C)(ii), §98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A))

☐ Yes, and the additional eligibility criteria are: (Terms must be defined in Appendix 2)

☐ No.

☒ Not applicable. CCDF-funded child care is not provided in cases in which children receive, or need to receive, protective services.

**Note:** The Division of Children and Family Services, through collaboration with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, allocates approximately \$1,000,000 of Title IV-E and Title IV-A funds to pay for child care for Foster Care and Protective Services annually.

- 3.3.5 Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care? (Physical and mental incapacity must then be defined in Appendix 2.) (658E(c)(3)(B), 658P(3), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

☒ Yes, and the upper age is **19**.

☐ No.

- 3.3.6 Does the Lead Agency allow CCDF-funded child care for children above age 13 but below age 19 who are under court supervision? (658P(3), 658E(c)(3)(B), §98.20(a)(1)(ii))

☐ Yes, and the upper age is \_\_\_\_.

☒ No.

3.3.7 Does the State choose to provide CCDF-funded child care to children in foster care whose foster care parents are not working, or who are not in education/training activities? (§§98.20(a)(3)(ii), 98.16(f)(7))

☐ Yes. (**NOTE:** This means that for CCDF purposes the State considers these children to be in protective services.)

☒ No.

3.3.8 Does the State choose to provide child care to children in protective services? (§§98.16(f)(7), 98.20(a)(3)(ii)(A) & (B))

☐ Yes.

☒ No.

### **3.4 - Priorities for Serving Children and Families**

3.4.1 Describe how the State prioritizes service for the following CCDF-eligible children: (a) children with special needs, (b) children in families with very low incomes, and (c) other. Terms must be defined in Appendix 2. (658E(c)(3)(B))

The following groups of individuals are listed in order of the priority they are given in the eligibility process:

1. Special Needs
2. Teens in High School
3. Homeless
4. Low Income with No Fee
5. Low Income who would Pay a Fee

3.4.1.1 Describe how CCDF funds will be used to meet the needs of: (a) families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), (b) those attempting to transition off TANF through work activities, and (c) those at risk of becoming dependent on TANF. (658E(c)(2)(H), Section 418(b)(2) of the Social Security Act, §§98.50(e), 98.16(g)(4))

Families who are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) receive child care in order to allow them to participate in job training activities, assessments, on-the-job training, educational programs, etc. according to the state plan. Families who are attempting, through work activities, to transition off assistance programs will receive transitional child care for up to three years. The first year of child care assistance is provided at no fee to the family regardless of income. The second and third year the sliding fee scale applies to the family's income. There is a 3-year lifetime limit for transitional support.

Low-income working non-TANF families that are at-risk of becoming dependent on assistance programs are served based on the sliding fee scale and the availability of funds.

3.4.3 Does the Lead Agency maintain a waiting list?

☒ Yes. If yes, for what populations? Is the waiting list maintained at the State level? Are certain populations given priority for services, and if so, which populations? What methods are employed to keep the list current?

Waiting list is maintained by county for all populations. Priority on the waiting list is the same as listed in 3.4.1. Applications are processed daily by central office division staff to ensure waiting list is current. The same staff also schedules appointments for the caseworkers to ensure that families are removed from the waiting list as soon as services become available.

☐ No. If no, does the Lead Agency serve all eligible families that apply?

☐ Yes.  
☐ No.

Are there other ways that the Lead Agency addresses situations in which funding is not sufficient to serve all families that are technically eligible under State policies? If so, describe.

Families meeting the eligibility requirements for Arkansas Better Chance (State Pre-K) and Head Start are referred to those agencies by caseworkers when appropriate.

### **3.5 - Sliding Fee Scale for Child Care Services**

3.5.1 A sliding fee scale, which is used to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care, must vary based on income and the size of the family. A copy of this sliding fee scale for child care services and an explanation of how it works is provided as **Attachment 11**.

The attached fee scale was or will be effective as of **July 1, 2005**.

Will the Lead Agency use additional factors to determine each family's contribution to the cost of child care? (658E(c) (3)(B), §98.42(b))

☐ Yes, and the following describes any additional factors that will be used:  
☒ No.

3.5.2 Is the sliding fee scale provided in the attachment in response to question 3.5.1 used in all parts of the State? (658E(c)(3)(B))

☒ Yes.  
☐ No, and other scale(s) and their effective date(s) are provided as **Attachment \_\_\_\_**.

- 3.5.3 The Lead Agency may waive contributions from families whose incomes are at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size, (§98.42(c)), and the poverty level used by the Lead Agency for a family of 3 is: \$\_\_\_\_\_.

The Lead Agency must elect ONE of these options:

- ☒ ALL families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee.
- ☐ ALL families, including those with incomes at or below the poverty level for families of the same size, ARE required to pay a fee.
- ☐ SOME families with income at or below the poverty level for a family of the same size ARE NOT required to pay a fee. The following describes these families:

- 3.5.4 Does the Lead Agency have a policy that prohibits a child care provider from charging families any unsubsidized portion of the provider's normal fees (in addition to the contributions discussed in 3.5.1)? (§98.43(b)(3))

☒ Yes. Please describe:

Providers are required to sign the Child Care System Participant Agreement (DHS 9800) attesting to the following (Part V: Paragraph D.): “the Provider agrees to accept the DHS Certificate of Authorization as authorization to provide services. The Provider agrees to accept reimbursement received from DHS as payment in full for all services covered by this Agreement except the collection of fees expressly authorized by DHS.” (*See ATTACHMENT #12.*)

☐ No.

- 3.5.5 The following is an explanation of how the co-payments required by the Lead Agency's sliding fee scale(s) are affordable: (§98.43(b)(3))

Since the State's sliding fee scale is set at 60% of the State Median Income, and wages are low in Arkansas, only 7% of the recipients of child care assistance have to pay any type of fee at all.



## **PART 4 - PROCESSES WITH PARENTS**

### **4.1 - Application Process / Parental Choice**

4.1.1 The following describes the process for a family to apply for and receive child care services (658D(b)(1)(A), 658E(c)(2)(D) & (3)(B), §§98.16(k), 98.30(a) through (e)). If the process varies for families based on eligibility category, for instance, TANF versus non-TANF, please describe. The description should include:

- How parents are informed of the availability of child care services and about child care options
- Where/how applications are made
- Who makes the eligibility determination
- How parents who receive TANF benefits are informed about the exception to individual penalties as described in 4.4
- Length of eligibility period including variations that relate to the services provided, e.g., through collaborations with Head Start or pre-kindergarten programs
- Any steps the State has taken to reduce barriers to initial and continuing eligibility for child care subsidies

#### **How Parents are Informed of the Availability of the Child Care Program:**

Parents receive information about CCDF services from Child Care providers; DHS County Office Staff including Child Care Eligibility Specialists, TANF staff, and Food Stamp caseworkers; Health Division employees; Employers; Schools; Publications; Newspaper Articles; the Agency Web Site and Television Broadcasts. Private, non-profit Child Care Resource and Referral staff make referrals, as well as DHS licensing staff.

#### **Where and How Applications are Made:**

Parents/custodians may request an Application for Child Care Assistance at any county DHS office or by calling a toll free number. Applications are also available on the Departmental Website. Completed applications may be mailed or delivered to any local DHS county office or the Central Office in Little Rock. The Eligibility Specialist or the TANF caseworker provides individual assistance or accommodations as needed. (*See ATTACHMENT #13.*)

#### **Who Makes the Eligibility Determination?**

Arkansas has forty-six (46) Child Care Eligibility Specialists who determine eligibility in their area. Each Specialist covers an area of four (4) to six (6) counties. These Specialists make the determination for assistance for the low-income families who are working or attending school. Eligibility for TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy

Families) subsidies is established in the local DHS County Office by their TANF caseworker, then referred to the Division for child care assistance if needed.

### **How Parents who Receive TANF Benefits are Informed about the Exception to Individual Penalties, as Described in 4.4?**

During the employment planning process, if the client cannot arrange child care for any of the definitions described in 4.4, the client receives a deferral from work activities. It is the responsibility of the TANF caseworker to inform the parents who receive TANF benefits of the exceptions due to the parent's inability to locate child care.

### **Length of Eligibility:**

The length of eligibility for low-income working families is on going with re-evaluations for continued eligibility re-determined every six months.

TANF families are assured child care assistance during the time the TANF cash assistance case is open and child care is needed. Families who are attempting through work activities to transition off assistance programs will receive transitional child care for up to three years. The first year of child care assistance is provided at no fee to the family regardless of income. The second and third year the sliding fee scale applies to the family's income. There is a 3-year lifetime limit for transitional support.

### **Steps to Reduce Barriers:**

To reduce the length of time on the waiting list, clients were scheduled in group settings. This allowed more people to be seen in a shorter period of time with a limited number of workers. In these meetings the basic information was covered together and then a caseworker met with each individual client to discuss confidential information and documentation for each case. Evening and weekend interviews were conducted to accommodate work schedules. Additional staff was added in order to serve more clients.

- 4.1.2 The following is a detailed description of how the State ensures that parents are informed about their ability to choose from among family and group home care, center-based care and in-home care including faith-based providers in each of these categories.

All applicants for child care assistance are given a copy of Rights and Responsibilities (*See Attachment #14*) that informs them that they may choose any participating provider. In addition to a written document, caseworkers also verbally inform clients of this right during the eligibility process.

## **4.2 - Records of Parental Complaints**

The following is a detailed description of how the State maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and how it makes the information regarding such parental complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C), §98.32))

All complaints against child care providers must be investigated by licensing staff. Substantiated parental complaints are kept in the provider file and are available to the public upon request. Parents are referred to the local licensing specialist for an explanation of any substantiated complaints. Interested parties may obtain copies; however, confidential information is deleted from the document before release as required by state law.

#### **4.3 - Unlimited Access to Children in Child Care Settings**

The following is a detailed description of the procedures in effect in the State for affording parents unlimited access to their children whenever their children are in the care of a provider who receives CCDF funds. (658E(c)(2)(B), §98.31))

Providers are required to sign an agreement in order to participate in the Child Care System. Section V Part E, states the Provider agrees to allow the client unlimited access to the client's child(ren) when the child(ren) is/are in the facility. (*See ATTACHMENT #12.*) Licensing regulation also requires unlimited access as well.

Parents receive printed information that informs them of this right when they are found to be eligible and approved for child care assistance. Any reports of providers who do not allow parental access are subject to termination of the agreement after notification.

#### **4.4 - Criteria or Definitions Applied by TANF Agency to Determine Inability to Obtain Child Care**

The regulations at §98.33(b) require the Lead Agency to inform parents who receive TANF benefits about the exception to the individual penalties associated with the work requirement for any single custodial parent who has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care for a child under 6 years of age.

In fulfilling this requirement, the following criteria or definitions are applied by the TANF agency to determine whether the parent has a demonstrated inability to obtain needed child care:

**Note:** The TANF agency, not the Child Care Lead Agency, is responsible for establishing the following criteria or definitions. These criteria or definitions are offered in this Plan as a matter of public record. The TANF agency that established these criteria or definitions is: **Arkansas Department of Health and Human Services, Division of County Operations.**

- "Appropriate Child Care:" Child Care that meets the minimum health and safety standards and guidelines established by the Division of Child Care and Early

Childhood Education Licensing Rules and Regulations. All care must be provided in a center, licensed day care home, a registered or a relative home.

- "Reasonable Distance:" The travel time from the parent's home to his or her place of employment must not exceed more than 30 minutes one way in order to be required to place a child in child care.
- "Unsuitability of Informal Child Care:" Care that does not meet the developmental needs of the child or care that has been determined not to be in the best interest of the child or parent.
- "Affordable Child Care Arrangements:" Care provided at no charge to the family for the first year after the family's TANF case closes due to employment assures affordable care. The sliding fee scale is applied after the first year.

## **PART 5 - ACTIVITIES & SERVICES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY AND AVAILABILITY OF CHILD CARE**

### **5.1 - Quality Earmarks and Set-Asides**

5.1.1 The Child Care and Development Fund provides earmarks for infant and toddler care and school-age care and resource and referral services as well as the special earmark for quality activities. The following describes the activities; identifies the entities providing the activities; and describes the expected results of the activities.

#### **Infant and Toddlers:**

##### **Infant and Toddler Earmarks**

1. The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education provides enhancement and improvement grants for quality development of infant and toddler programs. The grant fund designates Infant and Toddler expansion and new development as priority areas for the grants. All applicants for the grant program must provide verification of age-appropriate current immunization status for all children in care as a prerequisite for consideration. Grants will be available to assist child care programs in meeting the statutory requirement to have a child safety alarm in all vans used for transporting children.
2. Scholarships for all child care providers to obtain CPR training are available.
3. Scholarships for Child Development Associate (CDA) Credentialing are available for staff in licensed child care programs. A specialty for Infant and Toddler and Family Child Care is now available.
4. Technical Assistance/Consultation is provided to infant/toddler programs on request through a contractual agreement with a university. Specialists are available to assist in establishment; development and improvement of infant/toddler child care settings in both center-based and home-based settings.
5. Infant and Toddler Curriculum Framework: Strategies and activities are available for use in program development. Training in these early learning guidelines for infant and toddler age children is provided statewide. A third module for framework training is to be developed focusing on children's literature and strategies and activities based on a selection of books appropriate for infant and toddler age children.
6. Through the Healthy Child Care America Project, the Healthy Children's Handbook has been revised and reprinted. The handbook is available to infant/toddler caregivers and is used for all new directors of child care programs in New Director Orientation.
7. Assistance is provided to Universities, Community Colleges and Technical Institutes in accessing Federal funds through the Campus Child Care Act. A grant assistance session is held with all interested institutions of higher education to assist in making strong proposals.

8. Family Child Care Associations are supported in their efforts to extend professional development to caregivers and expand care to infant/toddler age children.
9. The Child Care Specialist Certificate has an Infant/Toddler Endorsement a 60-hour course of study specific to caregivers in infant/toddler programs.
10. The Caregiver Certificate program builds on the Child Care Orientation training and offers as one of six (6) modules, Child Development of Birth to Three.
11. “Making First Experiences Count” is a training program offered in three sessions to support the concepts of early brain development. The training is specific to parents, providers and other interested persons and is offered in community settings upon request.
12. “Picture This: Infant and Toddler Framework”, a guide for parent and providers to illustrate the developmental learning strands for infants/toddlers is available.
13. Posters that address the developmental strands and benchmarks appropriate for infants and toddlers is available for all programs.
14. Family Connections offering strategies for use in child care settings with emphasis on parental involvement will be available July 1, 2005.
15. Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accredited programs caring for Infant/Toddler age children have increased by five percent (5%). With increased incentive grants it is hoped that the number of programs approved will increase by ten percent (10%) annually. This benchmark is a part of our Divisional Strategic Plan.
16. The State has completed participation as one of the first year cohorts in the Zero to Three Infant and Toddler Child Care Initiative. This project of the Child Care Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, Department of Health and Human Services provided support in developing system-wide improvements in infant and toddler child care. Recommendations made by the group are being implemented and in some instances referred to the Comprehensive Systems Planning effort. These include: tiered strategies for quality improvement, changes in ratios for infant and toddler care, development of family child care networks to support expansion of quality infant and toddler care; a development checklist (based on the framework) for use by caregivers and Project HELP to offer a broad array of services through a Part C provider to other programs in proximity.
17. Right from Birth: A project sponsored by Arkansas Education Television Network in partnership with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, the Department of Education, Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Project and others, will reach and train parents, and caregivers caring for children birth to 18 months of age in materials developed from the Right from Birth book written by Craig and Sharon Ramey. The project includes train the trainers and materials for caregivers and parents.

18. Parents as Teachers (PAT): Funding through the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation for PAT, a parent education and family support home visiting program was eliminated. A small cadre of trained PAT home visitors continues to offer home visiting services through Title I and other patchworks of funding sources. Approximately 55 children are served in PAT programs through the Arkansas Better Chance program (state funded pre-K programs).

### **Resource and Referral Services:**

#### **Arkansas Child Care Resource and Referral Network**

Local Child Care Resource and Referral agencies work in coordination with the Division in several projects:

1. The Governor's Family Friendly Employer Initiative Steering Committee has a representative from the ACCR&R Network. The local CCR&R's are actively involved in increased business participation in their communities.
2. The Division provides grants to the four local CCR&R agencies and meets with the local CCR&R staff on a quarterly basis to ensure consistency in service delivery. This has resulted in development of "new baby" boxes, used by the R&R to recruit business participation.
3. Effective July 1, 2005, two newly established CCR&R's will begin operation, one covering Central Arkansas and another in the Jefferson County area. Both will work toward meeting Quality Assurance status.
4. A current CCR&R will be expanding services into a new target area.
5. All CCR&R's are required to apply for Quality Assurance status through the Child Care Aware network to continue to receive grant funding.
6. CHUILDREN of North Central Arkansas has received Quality Assurance status. The three other active CCR&R's have made application.
7. The four local CCR&R agencies assisted the Division in conducting the bi-annual market rate survey. Each agency made personal contact with each licensed and registered child care providers in their designated areas to obtain current child care rates. The un-served counties (those counties without a local CCR&R office) were divided between the local R&R's. This ensured a personal contact with all licensed and registered child care providers. The information was transferred to the Division electronically. The outcome resulted in 90% of all licensed and registered providers' rates participating, which exceeded previous years by 15%.
8. The Arkansas Child Care Resource and Referral network (local CCR&R's and the statewide Division office) will be implementing use of NACCRRAware with training to begin in fall of 2005.

9. The Division (Arkansas Child Care Resource and Referral) provides a toll free number for parents, employers and providers to obtain information regarding child care resources. This also serves as the referral service for parenting education, information on subsidy program and general information regarding training opportunities and operation of a child care program on a state-wide basis.
10. The Division maintains a website that includes all information (ages/location/hours of operation/fees/quality approval status/adding voucher participant status) on all licensed/registered child care settings. This site is available at no fee. Information for providers on funding, grant requirements, etc. is also available.
11. *Parent's Guide to Child Care* brochure is available through all CCR&R locations.
12. The Children's Data Center of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock will update and provide data on a county basis in GETTING READY FOR SCHOOL. This issue brief provides statistical data in fifty (50) differing component areas related to children, families, schools and economic indicators. The report is available on the Division web site. (See Attachment #15.)

### **School-Age Child Care:**

#### **School-Age Quality Initiative**

Arkansas State University (ASU)/Childhood Services Inc. provides support to school-age child care programs through a Quality Initiative Project funded by the Division utilizing quality set-aside funds.

1. A statewide School-age conference and regional conferences on school-age care are offered annually.
2. Monetary support is provided to the Arkansas Chapter of the National School Age Care Association for training and conferences.
3. Consultants and technical assistance are provided to school age programs in working toward Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation.
4. A quarterly activities guide for school-age caregivers, *School-age Links* is designed by ASU-Childhood Services and distributed to all school age child care programs.
5. A pre-employment training module is provided for summer school-age caregivers by ASU-Childhood Services.
6. Cooperative efforts between school districts and community based organizations applying for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Center funding allows for outreach and expansion of quality after school programming for children. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning



Center funding from the Department of Education will support partnerships for training for out of school time programs.

7. Enhancement/Improvement grants are available to licensed school-age child care settings to assist in upgrading care and expanding quality of care.
8. Establishment of the Arkansas Out of School Network (AOSN). This active network has submitted several grants and will be sponsoring a Governor's Summit on Extra Learning Opportunities funded by National Governors Association.
9. Arkansas has been a participant in the Best Practices project sponsored by NGA and the Finance Project in developing the AOSN.
10. A proposal for Mott funding for support of network expansion was not funded in 2004. The AOSN is working to resubmit with hopes of support from Mott Foundation to expand the work of out of school programs.

- 5.1.2 The law requires that not less than 4% of the CCDF be set aside for quality activities. (658E(c) (3) (B), 658G, §§98.13(a), 98.16(h), 98.51) The Lead Agency estimates that the following amount and percentage will be used for the quality activities (not including earmarked funds):

Approximately 6% or \$2,987,637

- 5.1.3 Check either "Yes" or "No" for each activity listed to indicate the activities the Lead Agency will undertake to improve the availability and quality of child care (include activities funded through the 4% quality set-aside as well as the special earmark for quality activities). (658D (b) (1) (D), 658E(c) (3) (B), §§98.13(a), 98.16(h))

Yes No

- X ☒ Comprehensive consumer education;
- X ☒ Grants or loans to providers to assist in meeting State and local standards;
- X ☒ Monitoring compliance with licensing and regulatory requirements;
- X ☒ Professional development, including training, education, and technical Assistance;
- X ☒ Improving salaries and other compensation for child care providers;
- X ☒ Activities in support of early language, literacy, pre-reading, and Numeracy development;
- X ☒ Activities to promote inclusive child care;
- X ☒ Healthy Child Care America and other health activities including those Designed to promote the social and emotional development of Children;
- X ☒ Other quality activities that increase parental choice, and improve the quality and availability of child care. (§98.51(a)(1) and (2))

- 5.1.4 Describe each activity that is checked "Yes" above, identify the entity(ies) providing the activity, and describe the expected results of the activity.

### **Comprehensive Consumer Education:**

#### **Child Safety Seat/Seatbelt Training**

Training sessions are provided statewide to both providers and parents through the collaboration of the University of Arkansas Medical Sciences, Department of Pediatrics, and Center for Health Promotion. These sessions emphasize the importance of using the proper restraint system for the age and weight of the individual child and also cover current state law and Child Care Licensing Requirement in this area. The aim is to reduce the number of child injuries and deaths from transportation accidents.

#### **Arkansas Children's Product Safety Act**

Following the passage of this act during the 2001 Legislative session, the Office of the Attorney General has maintained a listing of all unsafe/recalled children's products as established by the Consumer Product Safety Commission. These listings are periodically mailed to child care providers or made available on the Internet to those providers who have access. Providers are required to make the list available to parents and further to certify to Child Care Licensing annually that all identified unsafe products have been removed.

#### **Nutrition Education for Family Child Care Homes/Nibbles for Health**

The Special Nutrition Program received Nibbles for Health in January 2003. It is a series of newsletters targeted to the parents of young children and will be distributed to Child Care Centers and Sponsors. Child Care Centers and Sponsors will have the responsibility for making sure families receive this information. Nibbles for Health will also be presented at all Special Nutrition monthly and state regional training. Nibbles for Health is in a 1-1/2 inch binder and contains an introduction, three sharing sessions, forty one (41) reproducible newsletters in color and in black and white, three full sized posters and three reproducible sized versions and a CD ROM of the newsletter in color and black and white. University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Services utilizes Nibbles for Health in their Best Care Training modules.

#### **Child Care Resource and Referral Network**

The R&R network consists of four local agencies and the state wide office located within the Division. CHILDREN of North Central Arkansas; REACH of North East Arkansas; Arkansas Children in Pulaski County and North West Arkansas Child Care Resource and Referral provide consumer education to their specific areas. The North West Arkansas Child Care Resource and Referral office also house the Parent Center and have extensive training opportunities available to parents in the North West area of the state. Local Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies

STATE PLAN FOR CCDF SERVICES  
FOR THE PERIOD 10/1/05 – 9/30/07

operate to support parental access and business involvement in early care issues both locally and on a statewide basis. Over 3,000 referrals were made through the local R&R systems. Referrals through the division website reached over ½ million contacts. With the addition of two CCR&R agencies and the expansion of services to new counties the outreach to parents for consumer education efforts will increase.

PROGRAM	PROGRAM MEASUREMENTS	JAN-JUN 1997-98	1998-99	1999-00	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
Child Care Information and Referral	Number of Requests Received by Phone							
	1-800 State-wide	525	595	773	777	803	870	661
	North Central	1,314	1,665	531	796	344	444	4,561*
	North West	416	1,496	1,505	1,359	1,347	1,231	1,329
	North East	N/A	320	614	132	249	169	200
	Central Arkansas	N/A	N/A	N/A	130	160	288	519
	Requests Generated Through AECC Advertising	40%	60%	70%	80%	80%	80%	80%
	Internet Usage for R & R	7,134	171,003	311,396	463,028	582,895	900,768	1,132,573
	New Provider Kits Inquiries	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	352	720	840

\*-Resource and Referral agencies conducted extensive outreach to child care providers that significantly increased the number of actual contacts for FY 2004.

### Publications:

***Kids Directory, Little Rock Family, Northwest Arkansas Family, Arkansas Times and Arkansas Business Journal.***

These publications contain ads and other articles that provide consumer education to the general public. (See Attachment #16.)

Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education's Eligibility Staff.

Eligibility Workers throughout the state provide brochures and other printed materials to voucher applicants, assisting them in making selections that meet the needs of the family.

Arkansas Children's Week.

State sponsored activities held locally focus on differing topics that provide information to parents on early care and education issues. The theme for 2005 was "Learning all through the Day. Brochures are available for parents explaining how play establishes future learning and skills for school readiness and that learning occurs through out the day. Local Parent Play Days

are held throughout the state. These parent focused events culminating Arkansas Children's Week are sponsored by collaborative partnerships organized by the local Arkansas Early Childhood Association chapters. This activity will continue annually with a differing theme and activities.

### **Grants and Loans to Meet Licensing Standards:**

#### **Enhancement/Improvement Grants**

1. The Division will increase the available funds for Enhancement/Improvement grants available to licensed and registered child care settings for the purchase of equipment, material and supplies, for improving availability and quality of care. Priority will be given to expanded care for infant and toddler age children; second priority will be for programs applying for Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation status; third priority is for learning material related to literacy and numeracy; and fourth priority is for correction of licensing deficiencies. With passage of state legislation requiring a child safety alarm in each van transporting children, grants will be available to assist in installation.
2. The Division has in place a Child Care Facilities Guarantee Loan Fund Program. This guaranteed loan is available to child care providers in attempts to support them in obtaining bank financing for child care related projects.
3. Training and technical assistance is provided through the Arkansas Small Business Development Center.
4. Southern Financial Partners' Arkansas Women's Business Development Center Program will offer the "Business Side of Childcare" training in selected counties. Participants will undergo an eight-week program that covers the following: feasibility studies, licensing requirements and issues, nutrition, financial operations, capitalization and financing and organization and tax issues. This training will be available in East and South Arkansas Counties.
5. White River Planning and Development District, Incorporated, will provide new Family Child Care Providers with basic business and record keeping skills necessary to operate a home-based child care business. Topics covered include: information on getting started in child care, overview of basic record keeping, developing a parent contract, insurance and child care training session's availability. This will be in a 16 county area in north central and north east Arkansas.
6. White River Planning and Development District will provide grant writing workshops throughout the state to assist providers in developing strong grant writing skills, both for divisional grants and to search out other opportunities.
7. Child Care Connections will provide child care business training targeting rural areas of the state. Training will cover: record keeping, financial reporting, policies and procedures,

health, safety, licensing standards, benefits of profit and non-profit status, hiring and maintaining staff and blending funding sources.

8. The Division has a cooperative agreement with the Arkansas Department of Economic Development for initial review and recommendations for use of the Community Development Block grants funding for renovation and construction of child care facilities.
9. The Incentive Grant for programs meeting Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation standards will be increased from a maximum of \$1,700 to \$2,500.
10. CPR grants are available to assist programs in complying with licensing standards.
11. Child Development Associate (CDA) credentialing grants are available to assist in increasing capability of staff working in child care settings.

#### **Improve Monitoring of Compliance with Licensing Standards and Regulations:**

1. The licensing unit's CLEAN computer system allows staff to eliminate almost all paperwork related to the application process and documentation of monitor visits and complaint investigations. This has allowed licensing field staff to spend more time actually viewing programs and to be able to provide additional technical assistance.
2. A manual comparing American Academy of Pediatrics Standards, Quality Standard and State Licensing Standards is available for use as training tools for licensing staff.
3. Research and develop plans for possible implementation of "Child Care Facility Report Card" as a part of a tiered strategy for improving quality. The tiered strategy will involve both standards and reimbursement for subsidized care.
4. A cadre of 50 evaluators conducts reviews and monitoring of all ABC, Even Start and Quality Approved Programs annually using the Environment Rating Scales from Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center as the basis for evaluating program quality. Programs must rank at 5.5 on a scale of 1-7 to qualify for quality status. The Early Literacy and Language Classroom Observation (ELLCO) and the Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS) by Arnett are also used with a reduced number of ABC programs. Results of a pilot that reviewed 30 ABC sites and 30 paired non-ABC locations will be the baseline for determining whether to implement these additional reviews in all Quality Programs.

#### **Professional Development (Training, Education and Technical Assistance):**

##### **Professional Development Opportunities**

The Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (AECPPDS) is fully operational. This group is responsible for directing the professional development initiatives in Arkansas. A Steering Committee provides oversight for the continuing work of increasing professional development.

Professional development opportunities that are available to child care providers in Arkansas are listed in the AECPPDS SPECTRUM (*career lattice-See Attachment #17*). The SPECTRUM details ten levels of career development based on training, education, experience in the field and professional activity. The SPECTRUM plots a course for any individual developing a plan for professional growth in early care and education. These opportunities range from levels, Basic to Intermediate to Advanced.

- The Basic Level of training opportunities is for those practitioners who are developing an understanding and/or beginning to seek knowledge and skills in the early care and education profession. This level includes the Awareness and Orientation levels. Specific training opportunities include an Introduction to Child Care and Pre-Employment, Introduction Early Care and Education (40 Clock Hours), Child Care Orientation Training (20 Clock Hours), Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Orientation (18 Clock Hours), Family Child Care Orientation Training (8 Clock Hours) and Secondary Child Guidance, Management and Services (140 to 180 Clock Hours)
- The Intermediate Level is for practitioners who are frequently and/or consistently seeking knowledge and skills. This level includes the Certificate, Credential, Endorsement, and Technical Document levels. In the Certificate level the training opportunities are Caregiver Certificate, Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Certificate (60 Clock Hours), Child Care Specialist Certificate (60 Clock Hours), and Best Care (10 Clock Hours). In the Credential level is the Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Certificate (minimum 144 clock hours per year and a minimum of 2000 and up to 4000 on-the-job hours. Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Credential (60 Clock Hours), Child. Development Associate (120 Clock Hours) and the National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC) Accreditation (90 Clock Hours) are available to practitioners. The Endorsement level includes Child Care Curriculum Endorsement (135 Clock Hours), Mentor Endorsement (45 Clock Hours) and Pre-K Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas Endorsement (30 Clock Hours). The Technical Document gives opportunities provided by colleges that include Certificate of Proficiency (9 to 15 Credit Hours), Technical Certificate (24 to 30 Credit Hours) and Technical Diploma (CDA Credential and 27 Credit Hours).

Credentials are offered for the following: Director Credentials, Infant-Toddler Credentials, School-Age Credentials and Family Child Care Homes. CEU's or College Credit is offered with all training on the SPECTRUM.

The Division solicits proposals for professional development activities. Through the Request for Proposal (RFP) procedure, numerous proposals are submitted and reviewed. A panel of early childhood professionals reviews and rank all proposals received for consideration. Determinations are made based on rankings by the panel of judges.

The following entities have been awarded professional development/training contracts for the 2005-2007 State Fiscal Year:

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
DIVISION OF CHILD CARE AND EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT/TRAINING INITIATIVES  
CONTRACTS FOR July 1, 2005 through June 30, 2007**

**Arkansas Children's Hospital**

Project SCORE (Strengthening and Creating Opportunities for Reading Enjoyment) and Project SCORE PLUS will provide training sessions in fifteen counties to increase provider knowledge of research-based best practices in the area of Pre K Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas (Pre K ELLA). Target population includes, home based staff in HIPPY, center-based staff in School Districts, Head Start, Private and Faith-based programs, Tri-District Early Childhood staff including therapists and special education teachers in the following counties: Arkansas, Benton, Crittenden, Cross; Jefferson, Johnson, Lee, Logan, Phillips, Pope, Pulaski; Saline, St. Francis; Washington and White Counties.

Math and Science to be added in 2006

**Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service**

The Best Care, a 10 hour child care provider training program designed to bring early childhood professionals current information that keeps them up to date on subject matter and methods. Training will focus on four main subject areas: resource management, nutrition and food safety; health and safety; and child development/child care. The ultimate goal of The Best Care curriculum, training, print and on-line materials offer research-based continuing education to early care professional that will encourage high quality care. Training is delivered through the Family and Consumer Science county agents.

The Best Care Connected provides web-based training in timely topics including: behavior management, parent involvement, music and movement, cooking with young children, health and safety issues, and inclusion. Best Care Connected is delivered via Educator™, a web-based curriculum application that is highly interactive and effective. It includes extensive monitoring tools to track student progress and provides another option for professional development.

Guiding Children Successfully offers 12 hours of verified training through the Guiding Children Successfully video series, the Parenting Journey will be offered to caregivers and parents to extend the training to new customers.

Arkansas 4H After-school Program will provide training for caregivers in after-school care situations. The target audience includes programs in rural areas and those providing care in summer programs. Topics include: youth development, hands on learning, techniques to use with youth, life skills development, discipline, health, nutrition, program management and designing programs of training to meet individual program needs.

### **Arkansas State University/Childhood Services**

The Arkansas Governor's Family Friendly Initiative: Recognizes Arkansas employers for establishing and providing resources that support employees in balancing the needs of both family; and work. Employers are recognized, information is gathered through application and surveys for a team of judges to review and make recommendations for those to be honored. A public information campaign on the benefits of family friendly initiatives is included.

Helps and Hints for Child Care Family Homes and School Age Links for School Age Programs: Bi-monthly publications with topics, themes and activities for use in child care settings.

Arkansas School-Age Quality Initiative/Awareness Project: An effort to increase the number of quality approved school age programs, through work with directors of programs, use of self assessment study, provision of technical assistance and expanded consumer awareness activities. Support for the Arkansas Out of School Network (AOSN), one state wide conference, 10 regional min-conferences, 6 pre-employment sessions with persons new to the school age field and presentations at other aligned conferences serving school age professionals.

Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA): Conducted for child care programs (all ages) in numerous topics, including preliminary site visits for quality approval status. The T/TA visits are available upon request of the Child Care Licensing Specialists, the Program Support staff and self referral. Quality Approval site visits are scheduled by regional coordinators; these coordinators conduct inter-rater reliability site visits on 10<sup>th</sup> visit made by each monitor.

Director Mentor Quality Initiative: An effort to increase the number of programs obtaining Quality Approval. Mentors are assigned to work with directors of programs (child care, infant/toddler care and family child care) seeking quality approval. Participant's receive printed resources, self study guides and additional support and training in their work towards quality approval. Mentors receive additional certification.

Planning Groups: Periodically meet to make decisions regarding the theme and focus of the week and to plan special events. Parent materials will be developed.

Arkansas Children's Program Administrators Orientation: Orientation is the 18 hour comprehensive course required for child care licensure for all directors of child care centers. Orientation is a basic level course.

Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Certificate/Credential: Children's Program Administrator Certificate is a 60 hour course with topics including effective organization management, effective supervision, staffing, legal and financial management, family and community relations and program development issues. The next step for administrators is the Credential an additional 60 hour approved continuing education. The Credential program is a more individualized program with modules covering topics such as: managing change, mentoring, leadership, performance management, team building, leadership in diversity, managing conflict, financial management, and child centered curriculum.



**Mentor Endorsement:** This includes a 45 hour course preparing mentors to work with early care professionals in a variety of settings. There are three options for completion: 32 hours on line with 14 contact hours; series of monthly 6 hour seminars or series of Saturday and evening sessions.

**Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development Registry:** This is a coordinated system to track and promote consistent and on-going professional development and continuing education. The database tracks all approved training, verified trainers and practitioners training levels.

**Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas):** Delivery of the 30 hour training modules in 10 locations.

**Pre-Employment Training:** A program to prepare new employees desiring to enter the field of early care. Training is a 30 hour course, available online, on site, on-site with on-line combination. Topics include: Health, Safety and Nutrition; Child Development; Learning Environment; Language and Literacy, Curriculum Development and Professionalism.

**Child Care Specialist Certificates:** Infant/Toddler; Preschool, Family Child care or School-age education. 60 clock hours (6 CEU) addressing the specific professional development needs of the age grouping.

**Wrapping-Up Quality-Infant and Toddler Framework:** A 12 hour curriculum to introduce the Infant and Toddler framework. Each of three 4 hour sessions address: Purposes of the Framework and Elements of Quality Care; Developmental Strands, the Benchmarks and assessment for Infant and Toddler age children. The final session models using Frameworks to create activities related to familiar books for infants and toddlers.

### **Child Care Connections, Incorporated**

Technical Assistance to communities and schools interested in expanding services for early care and education programs. Initially, three to five rural areas will be identified and work will begin to establish partnerships within the communities. The Study Circle approach will be utilized. Development of materials regarding business management and funding aspects of operating a child care program to assist in partnership efforts. Additional technical assistance in community assessment and packaging fiscal resources for program development will be offered.

### **Dawson Education Service Cooperative**

Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas) Training (30 hour literacy module) for a 6 county region. Dawson Cooperative has partnered with Henderson State University for delivery.

Math Science to begin in January 2006

### **Early Childhood Services**

Adventures in Learning will be a set of 12 curriculum resources packets each focusing on an appropriate topic of study and each to be introduced with familiar children's books. The resource packets will be designed so they can be used by preschool directors and teachers who have limited experience and training in curriculum planning and implementation. The packets will be made available on the Division website and in print.

Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas): Delivery of the 30 hour training module in Central and Southwest Arkansas.

### **Southern Good Faith Fund**

Through the Arkansas Women's Business Development Center (ARWBDC), a 23 county area in Delta will have available specialized training seminars and one-on-one sessions to support long and short term business counseling and guidance in starting a child care business (both center based and family child care for all ages)

### **South Mississippi School District**

Math and Science in 2006

### **Our Educational Service Cooperative**

The cooperative will deliver Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas) training in a nine county area to all child care providers.

Math and Science in 2006

### **University of Arkansas Board of Trustees (University of Arkansas at Fayetteville)**

Beginnings, a bimonthly publication for child care providers will be developed.

Caregiver Certificate Program (CC): The program consists of 6 courses each 15 hours in length. The Caregiver Certificate is awarded after completion of the following courses: Health and Safety; Guidance and Behavior Management; Creative Activities; Child Development birth to three; Child Development three to five; Child Development five to eight. Training is available in numerous secondary centers, post secondary vocational technical school, technical institutes, technical colleges and community colleges.

Introduction to Child Care (ICC): A three hour course to acquaint individual with options available in the early care profession, how to open a child care program and the regulations and requirements necessary to get started.

Child Care Orientation Training (CCOT): CCOT is a ten hour orientation course for persons new to the field of care giving. (CCOT was previously a 20 hour course, but completion rates were dropping above the first 10 hours) The course is offered at community and technical colleges. Completion of CCOT allows a person to be eligible for a CDA scholarship prior to 6 months employment in a child care program.

Family Child Care Provider Training (FCCP): FCCP is an 8 hour mandated course for all licensed family child care home providers within their first 6 months of operation. The lessons include: The Profession and Regulations; Business Management; Organizing the Home and Guiding Children through the Day.

Early Care and Education Curriculum Endorsement (ECEC): The Early Care and Education Curriculum Endorsement (ECEC) contain courses on the intermediate level of the spectrum. The Endorsement contains 135 hours of specialized training including: AECE Frameworks (45 hours); Pre-K ELLA (30 hours); (to be finalized math and science-45 hours and social emotional development-45 hours)

Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas) is administered under the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville umbrella with delivery through both this contract and other contractors. The AECE Frameworks is administered in the same manner. These courses are mandated by Arkansas Better Chance for School Success (ABCSS) guidelines.

Math/Science and Social Emotional will be undergoing final revisions under a joint partnership between the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville and Childhood Services from July to January. It is anticipated that delivery will begin occurring by early 2006.

### **University of Arkansas at Fort Smith**

Delivery of Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas) and AECE Framework training in targeted six county areas.

Math/Science and Social/Emotional to begin in 2006

### **University Of Arkansas for Medical Science (UAMS) Partners In Health Science Program**

“Healthy Hearts-Health Science and Literacy: Professional Development for all Pre-K Teachers in the State. UAMS Partners in Health Science (PIHS) Program will train pre-K teachers in health science content; all participants will receive tool kit containing equipment and materials (syllabus, stethoscope, plastic heart model and plastic model of normal and atherosclerotic coronary arteries). A pilot training study to explore the feasibility of a bioterrorism curriculum for pre-K teachers will occur. This model combines health science and literacy activities.

### **UAMS Partners For Inclusive Communities**

Welcome the Children uses research based training material initially developed through the Nuestra Familia project and revised based on input from participants and evaluators. Two seven-hour training modules are being used one on “Cultural Diversity” and the second on “Second Language Development and Assessment in Early Childhood”. On going evaluation of the project is conducted by the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. To ensure sustainability, community training teams are involved in local areas. The project will establish a minimum of 10 local community teams to support the project.

### **White River Planning and Development**

Training focused on new family child care providers with one-on-one assistance in basic business and record keeping skills for successful operation of a family child care home.

The Elements of Successful Grant Writing, a training to be offered statewide targeting early care professionals. Three segments are to be offered: Basics of Grant Writing; Intermediate Grant Preparation and Advanced grant Preparation.

### **Keystone University Research Center**

An 18 month evaluation of the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (AECPPDS). The system design will be developed with input from the AECPPDS Steering Committee.

### **Arkansas State University Childhood Services**

Training and Technical Assistance (T/TA) for the assessment component of Arkansas Better Chance Program. The assessment instrument chosen is the Work Sampling System to monitor and evaluate the ABC Programs.

### **Rutgers University**

Design and implement longitudinal research study to assess effectiveness of the Arkansas Better Chance program in better preparing children for kindergarten. This project will be done in association with the National Institute of Early Education Research.

The Division continues to support early childhood organizations and associations in sponsoring conferences and institutes, by furnishing scholarship funds allowing attendance by licensed and registered child care providers. The WEE Workshop, sponsored by the Southern Baptist Convention, the Arkansas Child Care Providers Association conferences for staff and administrators, the Early Childhood Institute at Arkansas State University, pre-service institute for early care professionals, Family Child Care Providers Conference and the Arkansas Early Childhood Association annual conference are examples. Events recognizing excellence are held in association with these conferences.

### **Child Development Associate (CDA) Credential: Process and Procedure**

To become a CDA approved institution/instructor, an institution must complete a CDA Approval Application. The benefits of becoming a CDA Approved institution are numerous. First students wishing to apply for a CDA Scholarship must enroll in a CDA Approved institution in order to receive the scholarship. Secondly, the instructors must have appropriate child development background making them more fitting for the delivery of professional development hours. CDA Instructors are required to be registered in the AR Early Childhood Professional Development Registry and must participate in an annual CDA Academy sponsored by the Division. Thirdly, the CDA candidates have the opportunity to participate in the Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Program and to take more classes toward another nationally recognized credential. Fourthly, the CDA program is the foundation for other two-year degree programs required by many early childhood programs.

Many of the CDA institutions offer CDA Common Courses. The Higher Education Work Group established the CDA Common Course names, descriptions and content with the purpose of aiding institutions in the articulation process. The course titles are EDCC 1002 Foundations of Early Childhood Education, DECC1014 Child Growth and Learning and EDCC1023 Environments for Young Children.

Through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated August 2001, the Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and the Department of Education, Special Needs agreed to integrate the Child Development Associate (CDA) classes with the Arkansas Department of Education Paraprofessional Training Program. The purpose of the MOU is to strengthen the Special Needs in the areas of Legal/Ethical Aspects, IFSP/IEP and Awareness and Referral Strategies and to avoid the duplication of training. The Arkansas Department of Education accepts the successful completion of the CDA credentialing process as meeting the requirements for paraprofessionals working with children of special needs who are of preschool age.

### **Early Childhood Professional Development Registry**

The Registry is housed at Arkansas State University's Childhood Services under a contract with the Division. The Registry maintains a practitioner's registry and an approved trainer registry. A registry of all approved training is also maintained and included on a web-site. Participants may register for any approved training session on-line. This web site links to the Division web-site.

### **Technical Assistance Availability**

Through a contract with the Division, Arkansas State University's Childhood Services evaluators and consultants offer Technical Assistance to child care providers on request of a provider or from referral by child care licensing specialists based on specific identified needs. During the

past fiscal year over 1000 site visits or individual training sessions were conducted by the evaluator-consultants.

### **Other**

Training and Technical assistance in the business aspects of operating an early care and education program is offered by several groups. Contracts are in place with White River Planning and Development District to address the special needs of family child care homes, Financial Partners will be conducting a series of sessions on the “Business of Child Care” for persons interested in beginning a child care business and for persons needing additional assistance in the fundamentals of business operations. A Technical assistance contract is in place with the Play School Day Care for the administrator, director and fiscal agent to assist programs in developing strong business plans. These requests are made by individuals and by referral from the Division.

The Arkansas Child Care Resource Center (a lending library for early care providers) is available to all licensed and registered child care programs and staff in the State. Materials may be requested by use of the toll-free number and mailed to the program. An online catalogue and check-out capability will be implemented in 2004. The Center is open Monday-Friday from 8:00 to 4:30 for patrons to access and use the books and other resources such as Ellison Cutter, copy machine, laminator, binder, etc. Training sessions for providers are scheduled on a regular basis at the Resource Center.

### **Improve Salaries and Other Compensation for Child Care Providers:**

#### **Child Care Apprenticeship**

The Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Project (ACCAP) has expanded to seven (7) registered locations in the state. Through the apprenticeship project, agreement is reached with the employer to provide specific salary increases based on training/education completed during the apprenticeship class work and on-the-job training. Over one hundred (100) have participated in the ACCAP program during the past year, it is anticipated that an additional one hundred and fifty (150) students will complete the training during the 2005-2007 timeframe.

#### **Professional Development Spectrum**

Child Care agencies in the state base salary increases on the level of an employee’s education within the Professional Development Spectrum. This establishes a clear path to salary increases for employees and allows for employers to have clear policy and procedures regarding salary increases. The use of the Spectrum in this manner is not mandatory but has proven to be useful for programs on a voluntary basis.

#### **Quality Accreditation Incentive Grants**

Programs meeting the State Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation standards receive incentive grants after completion. The grant is based on the size of the program and provides a direct incentive for completion of the Quality Approval/Accreditation process. The Division will increase the maximum grant available.

### **Core Quality Component Model/Arkansas Better Chance**

Increased reimbursement for the public Pre-K program was approved by the State Board of Education in February 2002. Funds to support ABC programs were based on the following components: Highly Educated staff with salary and fringe benefits, low staff-child ratio; developmental assessment; professional development for staff; and parent engagement and involvement. The rate as established was based on an actual cost analysis of current highly successful programs. Programs must provide a 40% local match to the 60% provided through State General Revenue. The core quality model established salaries for early childhood educators at a level commensurate with public school teachers; part of the funding comes from a 3% excise tax on package beer.

The model was also increased for the 2004-2005 program year and will increase again for the 2005-2006 program year. These increases reflect the emphasis on increasing early childhood professional salaries. The current reimbursement rate for this next year will be \$4,400 per child for a center-based program and \$1,557 per child for a home-visiting based program. (*See Attachment #18.*)

### **Activities to Support Early Language, Literacy, and Numeracy:**

#### **Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas)**

The Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, and the Head Start Collaboration Project joined together to develop a training program that addresses the issue of pre-literacy skills. What emerged was the *Pre-K Early Learning Literacy in Arkansas Initiative* (Pre-K ELLA). This is a comprehensive, five-day training designed for all early education settings, including center-based care, family child care homes, and professionals working with parents in the *Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-school Youngsters* (HIPPY) program. The joint efforts of all concerned resulted in this 30 hour comprehensive training through use of CCDF quality funds the Division assures the training is delivered free of charge all across the state, in Arkansas universities, community colleges and technical institutes. The training includes the following components:

- Social and Emotional Development Related to Literacy
- Creating Learning Environments that are Literacy Rich and Guide Behavior
- Overview of Language Development – Language Arts
- Promoting Language and Literacy
  - The Role of Play
  - Dramatic Play, Drama and Play Acting
  - Read Aloud

- Storytelling
- Poetry, Nursery Rhymes, Finger Plays, Songs
- Reading Experiences – Shared Reading
- Learning about Letters, Sounds and Words
- Environmental Print
- Writing in the Pre-K Balanced Literacy Program
- Assessment, Observation, and Portfolio
- Fostering Children’s Emergent Literacy Development Through the Family
- Learning Environments for Children with Special Needs

This collaboration also produced a comprehensive evaluation that studied the comparison of teacher behavior and classroom environment in pre- and post-training settings. The data from this evaluation will be used to refine elements of the training over the next year. This comprehensive early literacy training continues to be available statewide.

### **Early Childhood Education Framework/Strategies and Activities**

These Early Learning Guidelines are used extensively throughout the state. Training in curriculum development based on the framework continues to be offered state-wide as a part of the Child Care endorsement project. The Early Learning Guidelines includes a Developmental Rating Scale as a companion piece based on the five developmental strands. For each of the learning strands, benchmarks are identified and strategies and activities along with skills and behaviors that are observable. A 45 training module is being presented statewide. The three 15 hours training covers: An Introduction to the Framework; Developing Curriculum Based on the Framework; and Observation and Assessment.

### **Infant and Toddler Framework with Strategies and Activities**

Early Learning Guidelines for infant and toddler age children, including strategies and activities that caregivers may use to encourage children’s learning have been developed. State-wide training for implementation has occurred. Two modules have been available, an overview of the framework and developing curriculum. During 2005, a third section of this training will incorporate use of children’s literature for infant and toddler age children.

### **Family Connections**

Family Connections is a packet of materials designed to connect families of children ages three to five to the program in which their children are enrolled. The materials give program a practical way to involve families in activities with their children at home; activities that directly connect families with what is taking place in their children’s classrooms or child care settings or home visitor settings. The packet contains thirty-two sets of activities, with a common focus and is based on benchmarks from one or more of the five developmental learning strains identified in the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework. These packets are widely distributed to



early childhood settings. Family Connections for Infant and Toddlers will be available July 2005.

### **Home Visiting Programs HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) and PAT (Parents as Teachers)**

Home instruction programs support Parents as a child's first and foremost teacher. These programs focus on parents who stay home with their children, and also assist parents in becoming actively involved in their child's learning.

### **Math and Science**

The University of Arkansas at Fort Smith will develop a curriculum for early caregivers, specific to math and science activities and the benchmarks appropriate to math and science acquisition to be piloted, and revise it for state-wide delivery. The course will be designed as a three-hour college course or for CEU credit. During 2005, minor revision and Train-the-Trainers sessions will be held. State wide delivery will begin in January of 2006. A pre and post test/review of classroom activities will occur for participants (a small sample) to determine effectiveness of the professional development modules.

### **Story A Month**

A monthly story guide with activities tied to the Early Childhood Education Framework is provided. Original design is by a local Arkansas Artist. The Story a Month guides are available on the Division Web-site.

### **Linkages with Libraries**

A formal agreement is in place with partners, Department of Education, Head Start and the State Library to encourage and support library use by early childhood programs. Training of librarians in the use of "Story a Month" guides is conducted annually.

### **Activities to Promote Inclusive Child Care:**

#### **Early Childhood Special Education/Arkansas Department of Education**

The Division entered into a formal agreement with the Arkansas Department of Education Special Education Unit to ensure that Child Development Association students have training to qualify them to serve as paraprofessionals in local education agencies (LEA).

### **Friendship Community Care, Incorporated**

This provider will conduct sessions for early care and education providers focusing on children with special needs. The training will utilize satellite technology and transmit to eight locations in the state.

### **Welcome the Children**

Arkansas experienced a 337% increase in the number of Latinos living in the state from 1990 – 2000, (U.S. Census Bureau). Most Latino families move to Arkansas for jobs and become strong contributors to the state's economy. As our newest residents, these families bring a rich mix of culture and language that varies considerably from the Caucasian and African American ethnic groups that have historically comprised the majority of Arkansas' population. Child care providers, early childhood and elementary educators, and other professionals have been greatly affected by this population growth, but few have received training to assist them in adapting their services to work more effectively with Spanish speaking children and their families.

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education has addressed this training need by funding the *Welcome the Children* project, administered by the University of Arkansas Partners for Inclusive Communities (Partners). Using research based training materials, the primary goal of *Welcome the Children* is to assist child care providers and educators through training and technical assistance to understand cultural issues, learn strategies to support Latino children, and make appropriate referrals for possible developmental delays. Two seven-hour training modules are being presented statewide on “Cultural Diversity” and “Second Language Development and Assessment in Early Childhood.” Additional training modules are being developed to provide information on disabilities, specific methods of observing and assessing Spanish-speaking children for language delays, and effectively using/becoming language interpreters.

By the end of this project period (June 30, 2005), 292 professionals will have received training through *Welcome the Children*, with many of them participating in multiple sessions. In addition, over 1,000 individuals will have received information from the project as a result of displays and outreach efforts. Training materials are also shared through the project website [www.uams.edu/welcomethechildren](http://www.uams.edu/welcomethechildren). This website recently won an Award of Distinction in The Communicator Awards, an international competition honoring excellence in communications.

To ensure sustainability, *Welcome the Children* is disseminating the training through community training teams that consist of child care providers; early childhood and elementary educators; disability and healthcare providers; clergy; family members; and representatives of Latino groups. With in-depth support from project staff, these community teams coordinate local training efforts. *Welcome the Children* staff provides training, technical assistance, all training materials, and some financial support to assist the teams to present the training sessions to others.

Networking opportunities for the community teams is being provided through the project website and an annual conference on cultural issues, where team members will receive additional training and share ideas. Survey information is being collected to identify current practices and training needs to ensure that the training materials developed through the project meet the needs of early childcare providers serving Latino children.

In coordination with the Arkansas Department of Education/Early Childhood Special Education (part C/IDEA) office, children with special needs are served in Head Start, ABC and voucher programs. Additional services may be provided by local school districts or through the Regional Educational Services Cooperatives.

In coordination with Child Health Management Services (CHMS), intensive medical early intervention care is provided to children with special health care needs, ages six (6) months to four (4) years of age. This program results in individually designed programs of speech, occupational and physical therapy and provides parent education and support networks. All CHMS programs are licensed as child care settings, and the majority meet the Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation standards.

Reimbursement for special needs is not subject to the county cap rate. The rates are individually set based on the needs of the child.

The Division Director serves on the Interagency Coordinating Council on Early Intervention.

### **Project HELP**

Project Help is an outgrowth of the Arkansas National Infant/Toddler Child Care Initiative, sponsored by the national Zero To Three organization. The Arkansas team identified a need to provide a model for child care setting to access services for children with special needs whom they are serving. They partnered with North Hills Child Development Center in North Little Rock to pilot a program that provides early intervention services to child care centers in their own setting, therefore serving children in their least restricted environment. This project is ongoing, and a replication manual will provide other communities for a model for carrying out this strategy in their community.

### **Medical Homes and Social-Emotional Work Groups of the AECCS**

As part of the Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (AECCS) Initiative, these two work groups are cooperating to develop a better system for identifying developmental delays as early as possible. They are currently studying the possibility of a standard format for screening and for open communication between a child's primary medical provider, family, and the caregivers other than the child's family.

### **Healthy Child Care America and Other Health Activities in the Area of Social/Emotional Development**

The Division has established a collaborative workgroup around issues of children's mental health, dealing with challenging behaviors in young children and provision of professional development activities surrounding Social-Emotional Development in young children. Members of the collaborative include: Arkansas Head Start Collaborative; Arkansas Department of

Education; Arkansas DHS/Division of Mental Health Services, Division of Developmental Disabilities, Division of Medical Services/Children's Medical Services; and private and public providers of children's mental health services. This group has recommended establishment of 4 pilot sites to extend services to young children to include mental health, training for early educators in challenging behaviors, appropriate referrals for additional services and the availability of mental health professionals to offer services to children and families. These projects will be funded for 18-24 months, will include evaluations and may be the basis for additional program expansion depending on outcomes of the evaluation.

### **Community Mental Health Centers Partnership with Early Childhood Programs**

The purpose of Community Mental Health Centers Partnership with Early Childhood Programs is to facilitate collaboration between Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC) and early childcare programs, including Head Start centers and Arkansas Better Chance programs. The Division funded three CMHCs (Ozark Guidance Center, Counseling Associates and Mid-South Health Systems) to serve as pilot sites and to partner with at least three childcare programs in their region. The evaluation contract was awarded to the UAMS/Partners for Inclusive Communities.

During a series of meetings in the fall of 2004 with staff from the funding agency, pilot sites, evaluators and other partners, the specific goals and objectives of the project were outlined. While the specific activities differ somewhat from site to site, each pilot site agreed upon the following goals: 1) Enhance the capacity of childcare centers/teachers to prevent and manage mental health problems in children; 2) Enhance the capacity of parents to prevent and manage mental health problems in children; 3) Improve the outcomes of children enrolled in the collaborating childcare programs; and 4) Enhance the capacity of mental health professionals to prevent and manage mental health problems in children. Some of the activities will include teacher training and consultation, screening children for behavioral concerns and protective factors, making referrals for individual mental health services, conducting small and large group classroom activities, conducting parenting education and collaborating with local colleges and universities to offer training opportunities to students. Many of these activities began January 2005 and others will begin later.

The initial meetings were also used to obtain input from all partners on the evaluation plan. Together the group developed a logic model and discussed assessment tools they would like to use. After the evaluation plan was finalized, the partners met again for additional training and discussion. Data collection is ongoing. *(See Attachment 19 for evaluation plan.)*

### **Arkansas Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (AECCS) Initiative**

The Arkansas Department of Health is partnering with the Arkansas Department of Human Services, Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education to administer the programmatic activities of the State Maternal and Child Health Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Grants, funded by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau. The purpose of the initiative is to increase the health and well being of Arkansas' young children and their families by creating an

integrated service delivery platform for all early childhood services. The AECCS is organized around five work groups representing areas of concern:

- a. Early Care and Education: This work group is focusing on the matter of school readiness through quality early experiences, and is examining the possibility of a tiered quality strategy for early care settings. Components of quality that this group has identified include deliberate opportunities for cognitive, physical, social and emotional learning, parent involvement and education, attention to a child's physical (medical) needs, and links to community resources.
- b. Medical Homes: This work group is addressing concerns of preventive health care for children, including access to a primary care physician, health insurance, early identification of developmental delays, and integration with community resources for referral. One of the primary efforts of this group is to convene a discussion that involves child care providers, parents and health professionals to confront some of the current barriers in the system.
- c. Family Support: This work group seeks to coordinate efforts across the state to connect families with needed resources, empowering them to raise healthy families. Some of these services include home visiting programs, housing, adult education, marriage and family counseling, parenting education services, etc. One primary project is to develop a tool kit for parents to address the physical, social and emotional needs of their young children.
- d. Parent Education: This work group is seeking to strengthen the coordination of parenting education opportunities across the state. A need for coordination statewide of such opportunities has been identified, and a plan is being developed to address the need. The group has also identified a need for sufficient credentials for parent educators, and exploring several possibilities to address the need. The Family Development Credential, a paraprofessional credential for frontline workers who work directly with families, is being studied for its appropriateness to address some of these needs in Arkansas.
- e. Social-Emotional Health: This work group is working together with the Medical Homes work group to address the early identification of developmental delays. They are considering the possibility of identifying a recommended menu of screenings that could be made available to early care professionals.

Each work group has co-chairpersons that represent various state agencies, including the AR Dept. of Health, AR Dept. of Education, AR Dept. of Education-Special Education, Schools of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Arkansas Centers for Effective Parenting, AR HIPPY, and the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. All work groups are working closely together, and have formed crosscutting groups to support the work of the initiative. All groups are making recommendations to the Early Care and Education group to identify quality components in their specific area of concern.

Work groups will continue to meet to develop a comprehensive plan during the next year. After the plan is approved, a two-year implementation phase will follow.

The Director of the Division is a Governor-appointed member of the Comprehensive Adolescent Service System Plan (CASSP). This group directs the work of Mental Health Services, and has a taskforce working on early childhood issues.

### **Social Emotional Learning**

The University of Central Arkansas (UCA) was awarded the Social Emotional Learning Grant beginning in July 2003. The following five objectives reflected the challenge for the development and implementation team:

1. A comprehensive guide was to be developed.
2. An instructional training plan was to be developed for the presentation of training modules for participants.
3. Three professional development training sessions were to be implemented.
4. Follow-up consultations were to be conducted through face-to-face discussion, e-mail correspondence, and/or telephone consultations.
5. The effectiveness of the training was to be assessed.

A request was made at the awarding of the grant. The UCA team was asked to develop training modules designed to train teachers as well as to train trainers. The process for development began quickly after the grant was awarded. During the summer and fall months, the development and implementation team began developing training modules. In February, the development team requested that approximately ten educators review the training modules and provide constructive feedback. The draft of training modules was also used at the first Pilot Workshop conducted for two days with 14 teachers and administrators on April 22<sup>nd</sup> and April 23<sup>rd</sup> 2004. Six teachers who agreed to attend the first pilot workshop canceled at the last moment. Therefore, there were not 20 participants attending the two-day workshop. The review team and the 14 workshop participants provided a wealth of information useful for draft revisions. The following suggestions represent a sampling of comments:

1. Simplify the text for trainers and participants.
2. Use children rather than students throughout the text.
3. Remove particular activities and text inappropriate for this particular age group.
4. Make participant activities more experiential.
5. Make sure the text reflects diverse learners.

The aforementioned formative and summative assessment data was collected from questionnaires and focus group discussions as well as written comments made by the review team.

A thorough review of the recommendations followed the first workshop. The development and implementation team began making substantial revisions based on the constructive feedback. Using the revisions, the development and implementation team conducted the second Pilot Workshop to 18 teachers and administrators October 28<sup>th</sup>, October 29<sup>th</sup>, and November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2004. A third day was added to the second workshop based on participant feedback that emphatically reflected, “We want more workshop time to learn the material!” The development and implementation team entertained more suggestions from the new participants and conducted another thorough revision of the training modules. The third Pilot Workshop occurred April 20<sup>th</sup>, April 21<sup>st</sup>, and April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2005. Eighteen teachers and administrators attended this three-day workshop.

Focus group, questionnaire, and follow-up feedback reflected the following assessments:

1. Almost everything taught exceeded what I already knew.
2. I believe all the training modules were strong.
3. The visual cues were good incentives to me become more motivated.
4. I have learned more about the importance of social emotional learning.
5. I have learned how to integrate social emotional learning throughout the curriculum.
6. The ideas were very practical.
7. I need to add more social emotional activities at my center.
8. The materials were very useful.
9. More time needs to be devoted to such learning.

The most consistent strength of the workshop was reflected by participants who exclaimed that they would new ideas about social emotional learning into their classrooms. The most consistent weakness of the workshop was reflected by participants who exclaimed that they needed more time.

Follow-up observations in a variety of centers or preschools reflect an increase in social emotional activities designed to promote social emotional learning among young children. There are more sights and sounds within the classroom that reflect participant learning.

At the present time, the development and implementation team are completing the fourth revision. The training packet at this time is comprised of the following:

- Use of Training Materials
- Glossary
- References
- Topic 1: Importance of Teacher Self-Awareness and Self-Acceptance  
Handouts 1-19
- Topic 2: Introduction to Social Emotional Learning  
Handouts 1-13
- Topic 3: Teaching Social Emotional Learning  
Handouts 1-21
- Topic 4: Understanding and Accepting Children's Behaviors  
Handouts 1-33
- Topic 5: Promoting Positive Social Emotional Behaviors Using the Teacher  
Affirmation Steps  
Handouts 1-13
- Topic 6: Social Emotional Learning All Day Every Day  
Handouts 1-34
- Topic 7: Positive Action Against Aggressive Behaviors  
Handouts 1-20
- Topic 8: Social Emotional Development Through Literacy  
Handouts 1-23
- Topic 9: Family Influence and Social Emotional Learning  
Handouts 1-22
- Appendix 1: Make and Take Suggestions and Patterns for Promoting SEL
- Appendix 2: Children's Books that Promote SEL
- Appendix 3: Websites that Promote SEL
- Appendix 4: Social Emotional Interventions
- Appendix 5: Early Childhood Organizations

The training packet also includes a Participant Manual along with the Trainer's Manual.

The Training Manual and Participant Manual reflect tremendous effort to organize information relevant to teachers. Of course, workshops comprised of few days can cover only so much. While there are additional topics important for teaching, the development and implementation team identified the aforementioned nine to represent important topics to promote social emotional learning. There is no question the workshop series should extend over a five day period. There is some debate regarding the feasibility of five day workshops offered over a five day period or breaking the five days up into three and two, two, two, and one, or two and three. This decision needs more consideration. However, it is strongly believed that at least five days will be necessary to provide adequate social emotional training for teachers and administrators.

The training modules will be implemented in the Fall of 2005. We anticipate the need for on-going review where the training text can be modified along the way. There are more training modules that can be added to enhance the training packet. Yet, it is believed that appreciable change will occur once teachers' participate in the social emotional learning workshops.



### **Healthy Child Care America**

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education has assumed the role of lead agency for the State's Healthy Child Care America grant effective February 2003. Previously the Arkansas Department of Health served as lead agency for this project. Coordination will continue focusing on the following projects:

1. Revision of the Healthy Children's Handbook will be completed with copies going to all childcare directors. Additionally the guide is used with all new center directors in the required Child Care Administrator Training sessions.
2. This grant supports development of a Child Care Licensing Handbook comparing minimum licensing standards, State Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation Standards, and National Standards from "Caring for Our Children, National Health and Safety Performance Standards: Guidelines for Out-Of-Home Child care Programs." This guide will provide documentation and assistance to licensing staff in viewing the levels of quality care in programs in Arkansas.
3. A provider-training curriculum regarding the social-emotional development of children birth to five is being developed and will be available statewide.

5.1.5 Is any entity identified in sections 5.1.1 or 5.1.4 a non-governmental entity?

☐ No.

☒ Yes, the following entities named in this part are non-governmental:

Name: **Arkansas Child Care Resource and Referral Network agencies RECHECK**

Type: **Local non-profit**

Name: **Early Childhood Services, Incorporated**

Type: **Non-profit Professional Training organization**

Name: **Arkansas Chapter of the National School Age Alliance**

Type: **Non-profit professional organization**

Name: **Southern Financial Partners AR Women's Business Development Center**

Type: **Bank**

Name: **White River Planning and Development District**

Type: **Economic Development agency**

Name: **Child Care Connections, Incorporated**

Type: **Community based for-profit**

Name: **Arkansas Early Childhood Association**

Type: **Non-profit Professional organization**

Name: **Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families**  
Type: **Non-profit advocacy group**

Name: **Southern Baptist Convention (WEE Workshop)**  
Type: **Faith-based entity**

## **5.2 - Good Start, Grow Smart Planning and Development**

This section of the Plan relates to the President's *Good Start, Grow Smart* initiative which is envisioned as a Federal-State partnership that creates linkages between CCDF, including funds set-aside for quality, and State public and private efforts to promote early learning. In this section, each Lead Agency is asked to assess its State's progress toward developing voluntary guidelines on language, literacy, pre-reading, and numeracy, a plan for the education and training of child care providers, and a plan for coordination across at least four early childhood programs and funding streams.

### **5.2.1 - Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning**

- Indicate which of the following best describes the current **status** of the State's efforts to develop research-based early learning guidelines (content standards) regarding language, literacy, pre-reading, and numeracy for three to five year-olds:
  - ☐ **Planning.** The State is planning for the development of early learning guidelines. Expected date of plan completion: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ **Developing.** The State is in the process of developing early learning guidelines. Expected date of completion: \_\_\_\_\_
  - ☐ **Developed.** The State has approved the early learning guidelines, but has not yet developed or initiated an implementation plan. The early learning guidelines are included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.
  - ☒ **Implementing.** In addition to having developed early learning guidelines, the State has embarked on implementation efforts that may include dissemination, training or embedding guidelines in the professional development system. The guidelines are included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ **Revising.** The State has previously developed early learning guidelines and is now revising those guidelines. The guidelines are included as **Attachment** \_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ **Other (describe):**

Describe the progress made by the State in developing voluntary guidelines for early learning since the date of submission of the 2004-2005 State Plan.

Since last submission a Measurement Comparison of the Early Childhood Framework, Head Start Outcomes, Work Sampling System; Creative Curriculum Continuum, Kindergarten Indicators and the Kindergarten Frameworks was developed. This tool

provides a document that aligns all relevant frameworks for use by early care professionals in the State. (See Attachment #20.)

Training for early care providers (45 hours on Framework) is available statewide.

The Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework was approved by the State Board of Education in June of 1996. The passage of Act 236 of 1991 had a profound impact on education in Arkansas. One of the most significant changes resulting from this Act was the requirement that curriculum framework be developed at the state level and used by local school districts to develop curriculum guides to meet the needs of their students.

By 1995 local school districts had access to curriculum frameworks in the core content areas spanning grade levels from kindergarten through grade twelve. But, the legislation did not address development of guidelines for programs below kindergarten level. The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission (an 18 member Governor appointed Commission) appointed a task force of 30 diverse members to begin the arduous task of establishing an early childhood education framework. The individual members were widely recognized throughout the state for their professional contribution, insight, experience and the quality of their work in Early Childhood Education.

The framework was envisioned to guide the growth and development of children through a successful transition to a kindergarten curriculum based on the K-12 frameworks. As the task force worked over a 12 month period, a facilitator led them in studying, reframing and refocusing beliefs from both fields of education and child growth and development, thereby blending the concepts to ensure development across the domains.

The initial document issued in June of 1996 contained a mission, essential elements and developmental learning strands that should be evident in quality early childhood education programs. It also included examples illustrating various learning strands, addressed issues such as assessment and professional development, and incorporated a glossary of significant terms and concepts.

The Early Childhood Education Framework was originally developed to begin shaping and guiding, not dictating, quality programs in Early Childhood Education. It was developed with the belief that local administrators, teachers and caregivers are best suited to make decisions that directly affect the children and families they serve. But, what these decisions makers needed was a thoughtfully designed concise guide containing state of the art information about high quality early childhood education programs. This framework is that user-friendly guide.

As the framework was developed, the group established a mission for early childhood education programs:

***The mission of Early Childhood Education Programs, in collaboration with family and community, is to provide learning opportunities that promote growth of the whole child. In recognition of individual uniqueness, programs should reflect attention to***

***each child's pattern and timing of growth. A safe, nurturing, interactive environment is essential in order to maximize the potential and individuality of all children.***

The original Framework developed in 1996 included four elements of quality and five developmental learning strands.

Elements of Quality Early Childhood Education Programs

- Environment
- Diversity
- Family
- Strategies that support learning

Development Learning Strands

- Social/Emotional Development
- Creative/Aesthetic Learning
- Cognitive/Intellectual Learning
- Physical Development
- Language

Additionally, the area of professional development as well as program and child assessment was addressed.

The guiding principals of assessment include:

Principle 1: Effective assessment elicits and uses the most reliable information possible to judge the progress and growth of children. Portfolios and samples are used to maintain records and exhibit children's growth and development.

Principle 2: One of the most important processes in assessment is to observe children in activities related to each of the five developmental learning strands. Thus, educators and caregivers must develop thoughtfulness and skill in the practice of observation.

Principle 3: Assessment when used to monitor children's progress should be for and with them, not to them. Assessment should contribute to, not interrupt, developmental learning and therefore differs significantly from "testing" in the traditional sense of the term.

Principle 4: Program adaptations to better meet the developmental needs of children should occur naturally and easily from information gained in the assessment process.

Principle 5: Educators, caregivers and the child's family should participate fully in the assessment process.

Principle 6: Assessment should focus on the individual child's progress and growth, not comparison with the progress and growth of other children.

Principle 7: Assessment tools such as screening devices, rating scales, classifications, or checklists are not advocated as the ONLY means of evaluation of the growth and development of children. Such tools may be helpful; however, they must be used in specific contexts for clearly defined purposes and in conjunction with the other ideas embedded in these principles.

If developed, are the guidelines aligned with K-12 content standards?

- ☒ Yes. If yes, describe.  
☐ No.

Please attach a copy of the guidelines. If the guidelines are available on the web, provide the appropriate Web site address: [\*\*www.arkansas.gov/childcare\*\*](http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare)

### **5.2.2 - Domains of Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning**

Do the guidelines address language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts?

- ☒ Yes.  
☐ No.

Do the guidelines address domains not specifically included in *Good Start, Grow Smart*, such as social/emotional, cognitive, physical, health, creative arts, or other domains?

- ☒ Yes. If yes, describe.  
☐ No.

- Social/Emotional Development
- Creative/aesthetic learning,
- Cognitive/Intellectual learning,
- Physical development
- Language

Have guidelines been developed for children in age groups not specifically included in *Good Start, Grow Smart* (children other than those aged three to five)?

- ☒ Yes. If yes, describe.  
☐ No.

Infant/Toddler

### **5.2.3 - Implementation of Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning**

Describe the process the State used or expects to use in **implementing** its early learning guidelines. How are (or will) community, cultural, linguistic and individual variations, as well as the diversity of child care settings (be) acknowledged in implementation? Materials developed to support implementation of the guidelines are included as **Attachment 21**.

In the area of Professional Development and Training the original framework set the stage for the systems of increased education and training for the early care profession. “The Early Childhood Education Framework Task Force members believe that educators and caregivers are professionally trained to provide excellent programs for the children they serve. However, as in all professions, the knowledge base is constantly expanding, and some issues should be addressed in ongoing professional development and training.” This set the stage for the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System.

By 1998, the K-12 Frameworks had been refocused to address specific benchmarks for attainment. As the original focus of the Early Childhood Education Framework had been the alignment with K-12 framework for successful transition for children from early care programs to kindergarten settings, a decision was made to expand the original framework. This expansion provided specific benchmarks, strategies and activities related to the Framework.

As the suggested strategies/activities were selected, care was taken to include the elements of quality early childhood education programs: environment, diversity and family.

The five developmental learning strands (DOMAINS) are the basis or expansion of the Framework:

- Social/Emotional Development
- Creative/aesthetic learning,
- Cognitive/Intellectual learning,
- Physical development
- Language

For each strand developmental benchmarks are identified and strategies/activities to promote development in each strand are given. Both general and specific strategies are included, and when possible, follow a sequence of learning. Some of the activities are specific to children who are English Language Learners (ELL), children with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and for children with special needs. The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale-Revised (ECERS-R) is used as a resource to ensure consistency between suggested activities and program evaluation.

A final component to tie the framework and benchmarks together is the use of the developmental rating scale. These three documents form the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework: Benchmarks with Strategies and Activities.

Several additions were made during 2003 to the Early Childhood Education Framework: Benchmarks with Strategies and Activities, including sections specific to phonological and phonemic awareness. A workgroup has reviewed the Framework and found these concepts to be present, but the terms are not used consistently.

In June of 2002, the Arkansas Framework for Infant and Toddler Care was finalized. Experts from many disciplines related to infant and toddler age children such as early

care, child growth and development, education, children with special need, faith-based program, and children of English Language Learning families, teacher preparation, Early Head start and Health professions were represented during the development and review phases. This framework is a document to guide the design and implementation of local early childhood program caring for children of infant and toddler ages and was developed to align with the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework and The Arkansas Department of Education Frameworks for Kindergarten.

Careful examination of the three documents show a clear connection, just as there is a bridge from the Early Childhood Education Framework to the K-12 Framework. The addition of the Infant and Toddler Framework provides a clear continuum for development and learning for children from birth to kindergarten and aligns to the Kindergarten Framework.

During the development phases of the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework document, careful thought was given to methods of sharing the information with the broader early care community. Several procedures were used. In August of 2000, the first Train the Trainers seminar was held. This session: An Approach to Curriculum Development for three and four year old children using the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework; provided the initial cadre of twenty-five (25) trainers for state-wide delivery of training on the Framework. Numerous sessions were held throughout the state during 2001-2002.

As the first phase was implemented, work was begun to expand the initial training module from a twelve (12) hour session to a forty-five (45) hour professional development session that would be converted to a three (3) hour college course.

This forty-five (45) hour professional development course has been completed. Framework training as an approach to curriculum development, benchmarking, assessment and observation of young children is delivered state-wide in a variety of settings, meeting the diverse needs of the early care community. These settings include community colleges, technical institutes and teacher learning centers.

The Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, and the Head Start Collaboration Project joined together to develop a training program that addresses the issue of pre-literacy skills. What emerged was the *Pre-K Early Learning Literacy in Arkansas Initiative* (Pre K-Ella). This is a comprehensive, five-day training designed for all early education settings, including center-based care, family child care homes, and professionals working with parents in the *Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-school Youngsters* (HIPPY) program. The joint efforts of all concerned resulted in this 30-hour comprehensive training being delivered free of charge all across the state, through contracts with Arkansas universities, community colleges and technical institutes. The training includes the following components:

- Social and Emotional Development related to Literacy
- Creating Learning Environments that are Literacy Rich and Guide Behavior

- Overview of Language Development – Language Arts
- Promoting Language and Literacy
  - The Role of Play
  - Dramatic Play, Drama and Play Acting
  - Read Aloud
  - Storytelling
  - Poetry, Nursery Rhymes, Finger Plays, Songs
- Reading Experiences – Shared Reading
- Learning about Letters, Sounds and Words
- Environmental Print
- Writing in the Pre-K Balanced Literacy Program
- Assessment, Observation, and Portfolio
- Fostering Children’s Emergent Literacy Development through the Family

This collaboration also produced a comprehensive evaluation that studied the comparison of teacher behavior and classroom environment in pre- and post- training settings. The data from this evaluation will be used to refine any elements of the training that are deemed necessary. The Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas) modules directly link to the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework and Head Start Performance Standards.

The DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, through the Child Care Development Fund, is funding the University of Central Arkansas Department of Early Childhood Special Education in the development of a forty (40) hour training series in social and emotional development. First, a comprehensive training guide will be developed (during the summer and fall of 2003) with approximately twelve (12) training modules designed to increase the early childhood professional’s skills in promoting the overall social and emotional development of young children. The instructional training plan will then be developed to organize the presentation of the training modules. Three training sessions will be conducted beginning in the spring of 2004 and ending in the spring of 2005. At the conclusion of the training, follow-up consultations will be provided for participants. A continuous evaluation process will accompany the project, using formative and summative analysis of each phase of the training. Participants from interested preschools and day care centers in Faulkner County, Even Start, the University of Central Arkansas Child Study Center, and all Community Action Programs of Central Arkansas (CAPCA) Head Start Centers representing Cleburne, White, and Faulkner counties will have an opportunity to participate in the pilot training. Collaboration is crucial to the success of the project. Professional development “sites” will be established where best practice is supported and displayed for participants to visit, reflect on best practices, and respond through telephone conversations, e-mail correspondence, CHAT room dialogue, and/or personal discussions. The training team has strong background experiences working with partnerships through local schools, CAPCA Head Start Centers, and the UCA Child Study Center. After the project is developed and tested, the design will be analyzed and refined in order to make the program available statewide.

A professional development project specific to math/numeracy and science instruction for young children is under development. Curriculum for early care education professionals



with strategies to development math/numeracy and science concepts for young children is being developed, piloted and evaluated by the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith. The development will include math specialists and early care professionals. The course will be evaluated; adjustments made and then delivered statewide to all interested child care providers.

The use of the Arkansas Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework: Benchmarks with Strategies and Activities, is mandatory for all public pre-K programs funded through the Arkansas Better Chance fund and for the preschool components of the Even Start programs. Additionally, participants in the School of the 21st Century programs require programs to meet the Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation standards that address use of the Framework document. Other programs are encouraged to implement use of the framework to assist in successful transition for children from the preschool setting to kindergarten entry.

The Infant and Toddler Frameworks: Benchmarks with strategies and activities are used statewide. A companion piece Picture This: A Framework for Quality for Infants and Toddlers provides through words and pictures a look at the development of a child from birth to three years of age with special emphasis on quality. Professional Development/training opportunities are offered based on the Infant and Toddler Framework.

#### **5.2.4 - Assessment of Voluntary Guidelines for Early Learning**

As applicable, describe the State's plan for **assessing** the effectiveness and/or implementation of the guidelines. Written reports of these efforts are included as **Attachment 22**.

Assessment of the effectiveness of the States' Early Learning Guidelines is a two-pronged approach. The state has developed specific assessments for determining program effectiveness and quality as well as specific guidelines for child outcomes.

The programmatic assessment includes use of the State's Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation system. This system provides requirements for programs to meet a level of quality care. Requirements include additional staff education standards, additional training requirements, parental involvement and alignment with the Early Learning Guidelines (Arkansas Early Childhood Education Curriculum Framework and the Arkansas Infant and Toddler Framework. Annual visits are conducted to the child care programs using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale appropriate to the type of care provided. (i.e.: Infant and Toddler, Family Child Care Home or School-age care.) Parents choosing to use the Quality Approved programs received a refundable tax credit on their state income tax.

The quality visits are conducted by a group of trained consultants, through a contract with Arkansas State University's Childhood Services, with a program coordinator within the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education.

Two additional nationally validated assessment tools are being tested for use with the ABC programs and for use with Quality Approval. Training in the use of the Arnett

Caregiver Interaction Scale (CIS) and the ELLCO (Early Language and Literacy Classroom Observation) has been conducted and these tools will be used in the assessment processes.

In regard to child outcomes, the Arkansas Early Childhood Curriculum Framework includes a developmental rating scale that identifies the benchmarks for achievement. Assessments are conducted by annually observing children in the child care or home setting and children are ranked as: not yet, emerging and consistently. These assessments are used to establish program goals to ensure continuing development of individual children. This developmental rating scale may be transferred to the kindergarten teacher and used for kindergarten assessment purposes, if the program meets the Quality Approval/Accreditation status.

### **5.2.5 - State Plans for Professional Development**

Indicate which of the following best describes the current status of the State's efforts to develop a professional development plan for early childhood providers that includes all the primary sectors: child care, Head Start, and public education.

- ☐ **Planning.** Indicate whether steps are under way to develop a plan. If so, describe the time frames for completion and/or implementation, the steps anticipated, and how the plan is expected to support early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.
- ☐ **Developing.** A plan is being drafted. The draft is included as **Attachment \_\_\_\_**.
- ☐ **Developed.** A plan has been written but has not yet been implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment \_\_\_\_**.
- ☒ **Implementing.** A plan has been written and is now in the process of being implemented. The plan is included as **Attachment \_\_\_\_**.
- ☐ **Other (describe):**

Describe the progress made by the State in a plan for professional development since the date of submission of the 2004-2005 State Plan.

If your State has developed a plan for professional development, does the plan include:	Yes	No
A link to Early Learning Guidelines	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Continuum of training and education to form a career path	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Articulation from one type of training to the next	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of trainers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Quality assurance through approval of	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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training content		
A system to track practitioners' training	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Assessment or evaluation of training effectiveness	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
State Credentials – Please state for which roles (e.g. infant and toddler credential, directors' credential, etc.)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specialized strategies to reach family, friend and neighbor caregivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

For each Yes response, reference the page(s) in the plan and briefly describe the Lead Agency's efforts.

See Professional Development plan below.

For each No response, indicate whether the Lead Agency intends to incorporate these components.

Are the opportunities available:	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Statewide	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Center-based Child Care Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Group Home Providers <b>N/A</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To Family Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To In-Home Providers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (describe):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Describe how the plan addresses early language, literacy, pre-reading, and early math concepts development.

See Professional Development plan below.

### Professional Development Plan

In 1997 working in collaboration with the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, the Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Project organized a Staff Development Work Group that consisted of thirty representatives from institutions of higher education, Head Start Grantees, community child care programs, and education service cooperatives early childhood programs. Key points of discussion included availability of training opportunities, the need for a state registry, linkage of advanced training experiences to benefits, and the need for involvement of professional associations. This group of committed early childhood professionals has grown to include a lengthy list of

stakeholders including: partnering state agencies, the business community, parents/families, public pre-kindergarten, resource and referral programs, center based programs, family child care home providers, faith based programs, Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training, and Workforce Education. Representatives from these groups continue to meet and work in various committees to assume the challenge of supporting, maintaining and guiding the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (AECPDS).

The Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development Steering Committee evolved as a state-level committee that serves as a body to guide, advise and make recommendations concerning issues related to the AECPDS. This committee is dedicated to defining and advocating for the implementation of a comprehensive early childhood professional development system that provides supportive, accessible and individually appropriate education that is linked to compensation in order to ensure high quality care and education services for children and families. This committee is made up of representatives from the entities listed above.

Sub-committees and work groups under the Steering Committee are Registry Work Group, SPECTRUM Work Group, Higher Education Work Group, CDA Advisory Committee and Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Advisory Committee. (*See ATTACHMENT #16.*)

The Registry Work Group now called the Registry Advisory Committee is established to insure quality, continuity and accessibility of professional development opportunities for practitioners. The role of the committee is to set standards for the Registry and advise the Registry Coordinator on operating policies and procedures. The Registry Advisory Committee chair serves on the AECPDS Steering Committee.

The SPECTRUM Work Group's purpose is to develop, design and organize the professional development opportunities in Arkansas and to produce a document that highlights the professional development opportunities and the programs that offer the training. This document is the SPECTRUM. Another responsibility of the SPECTRUM Work Group is to advise, make recommendations for revisions and updating.

The Higher Education Work Group (Articulation) is established and is working to improve the communication among colleges of all levels. Grant proposals must stipulate the number of CEU's or credit hours. This better ensures that transfer of hours and articulation agreements may be possible.

The Higher Education Work Committee developed and approved three CDA Common Courses to assist institutions in articulating the CDA course work from one institution to another. These courses, although not mandatory, have been implemented at most colleges.

The next task of The Higher Education Work Group is to formulate a plan to determine the barriers to articulation, set some priorities as to which barriers may be overcome and to establish strategies for removing barriers utilizing prior survey information.

The CDA Advisory Committee provides oversight to Child Development Associate programs in Arkansas. The Committee serves in an advisory role by making recommendations regarding approval of CDA Institutions, CDA Instructors, and CDA course work offered to students in Arkansas. As an oversight group, the CDA Advisory Committee has a responsibility for providing guidance and direction to the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education related to the CDA scholarship program and the Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Program that incorporates CDA training within its scope. The Advisory Committee establishes recommendations for on-going professional development activities that are offered to CDA instructors and advisors to ensure consistent high quality instruction for CDA candidates in Arkansas. Criteria that higher education institutions must address are:

- The institution meets the following definition: The institutions issue diplomas, certificates or degrees and are recognized as post secondary education institutions. These include all colleges, universities and vocational-technical schools.
- Institution offers college credit or CEU's
- Includes CDA Course Outline and Syllabi
  - Course Syllabi include the following:
    - Category for which course is designed
    - Provide a minimum of 120 clock hours of training in the CDA content areas.
    - Information related to the requirements of the CDA Assessment Process
    - List of topics/content covered in each course
    - Number of sessions
    - Length of sessions
    - Special Needs: Legal and Ethical, IFS/IEP, Awareness and Referral
    - Information about the instructor
    - Texts
    - Prerequisites or co-requisites
    - Course description/purpose
    - Goals and objectives
    - Description of course evaluation (test, assignments)
    - Course policies
- Include CDA Instructor Application
  - Education: Bachelor's degree in early childhood education or child development/Master's degree preferred
  - Three letters of support for instructor
  - Instructor's resume noting two years minimum experience working with young children
  - Professional Development Hours for last 12 months

The AECPPDS offers scholarships to students who attend CDA approved institutions of higher learning. AECPPDS maintains a close working relationship with Arkansas Workforce Education and Department of Labor Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training.

The CDA Advisory Committee functions as a sub-committee of the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System with the chair serving on the Steering Committee. Additional roles of the CDA Advisory Committee are to address future planning efforts and conduct an annual evaluation of the CDA Program in Arkansas.

The Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Program (ACCAP) Advisory Committee is a statewide committee composed of Child Care Professionals that makes decisions and provides guidance and leadership to the ACCAP and AECPPDS. Membership of the ACCAP Committee is made up of representatives from the following categories:

- Apprenticeship instructors
- Arkansas Mentor Endorsement Program
- Arkansas Workforce Education
- CDA Advisory Committee
- CDA Approved institutions
- Child Care Licensing
- Child Care Program Sponsors
- Department of Labor, Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training
- DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education
- Local Committee Members
- Registered Apprenticeship Instructional Site Representatives from:
  - Four-year college/university
  - Community or Technical Colleges
  - Technical Institutes
- Resource and Referral

### **Categories of Providers**

The Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System addresses all categories of providers. They include Infant/Toddler, Pre-School, Home Educator, and School Age. These categories are found in Center Based, Family Child Care Homes and Registered or Relative Care Homes. They may be private, public, faith based, and/or employer sponsored.

### **Professional Development Opportunities**

Professional development opportunities that are available to child care providers in Arkansas are listed in the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System SPECTRUM (career lattice). The SPECTRUM details ten levels of career development based on training, education, experience in the field and professional activity. The SPECTRUM plots a course for any individual developing a plan for professional growth in early care and education. These opportunities range from levels, Basic to Intermediate to Advanced.

- The Basic Level of training opportunities is for those practitioners who are developing an understanding and/or are beginning to seek knowledge and skills in the early care and

education profession. This level includes the Awareness and Orientation levels. Professional development opportunities include an Introduction to Child Care and Pre-Employment; Introduction Early Care and Education (40 Clock Hours); Child Care Orientation Training (20 Clock Hours) Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Orientation (18 Clock Hours); Family Child Care Orientation Training (8 Clock Hours) and Secondary Child Guidance, Management and Services. (140 to 180 Clock Hours)

- The Intermediate Level is for practitioners who are frequently and/or consistently seeking knowledge and skills. This level includes the Certificate, Credential, Endorsement, and Technical Document levels. In the Certificate level the training opportunities are Caregiver Certificate, Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Certificate (60 Clock Hours), Child Care Specialist Certificate (60 Clock Hours), and Best Care (10 Clock Hours). In the Credential level is the Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Certificate (minimum 144 clock hours per year and a minimum of 2000 and up to 4000 on-the-job hours. Arkansas Children's Program Administrator Credential (60 Clock Hours), Child Development Associate (120 Clock Hours) and the NAFCC Accreditation (90 Clock Hours) are available to practitioners. The Endorsement level includes Child Care Curriculum Endorsement (135 Clock Hours) Mentor Endorsement (45 Clock Hours) and Pre-K Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas Endorsement (30 Clock Hours). The Technical Document is an opportunity provided by colleges that includes a Certificate of Proficiency (9 to 15 Credit Hours), Technical Certificate (24 to 30 Credit Hours) and Technical Diploma (CDA Credential and 27 Credit Hours). Credentials are offered for the following: Director Credentials, Infant-toddler Credentials, School-Age Credentials and Family Child Care Homes Credential. CEU's or College Credit is offered with all training on the SPECTRUM.
- The Advanced Level is for practitioners who have knowledge, ability to modify, evaluate and synthesize; and/or are fostering growth, exercising leadership and promoting advocacy. These areas are the Associate, Baccalaureate, Masters and Doctorate degrees.

These are several of the professional development opportunities that are available to child care practitioners in Arkansas. These opportunities are available state-wide to any person interested in the early care and education profession.

### **Continuum of Training and Education**

The ACEPDS (plan) includes a continuum of training and education as noted on The SPECTRUM. The Intermediate Level on the SPECTRUM provides opportunities for the practitioner to choose an avenue of training. Many of the training opportunities begin with the CDA Credential. Students who have the opportunity to apply for a CDA Scholarship may attend colleges that have met criteria that have been established by the CDA Advisory Committee. There are approximately twenty seven (27) institutions of higher learning that meet these criteria. An updated list of these institutions is available. The CDA credential is recognized across the country and is a foundation for additional educational opportunities that the practitioner may choose. Many practitioners decide they will attend an institution of higher learning and work toward their AA degree. Some may take the extra hours and register for the Arkansas Child Care

Apprenticeship Program. The Arkansas Child Care Apprenticeship Program provides a monetary incentive to practitioners, which decreases staff turnover in programs. Others may work toward a Technical Diploma.

Located on the SPECTRUM is space where an individual may develop their individual professional plan.

The SPECTRUM is used by some early care and education programs to establish a salary scale based on staff educational achievement and levels on the SPECTRUM.

Other components of the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (plan) are the Vision Statement, Guiding Principles, Competency Areas, and the Registry.

### **Professional Development Quality**

The Vision Statement of the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (plan) is: *All early childhood professionals in Arkansas value a coordinated professional development system based upon research and best practice, which contains high quality professional development experiences, and allows for the development of career pathways to meet diverse needs of individuals.*

The Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (plan) is based on these Guiding Principles:

- The Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (AECPPDS) will utilize a cooperative approach among all constituents, access existing community and state resources to their best possible use, and involve local communities as appropriate in the decision making process.
- The AECPPDS will provide career pathways and opportunities leading to increased compensation commensurate with education and professional development.
- The AECPPDS will work to ensure that training/professional development opportunities can be linked to college credit, which can lead to degrees or other professional credentials.
- The AECPPDS will work to encourage, support, and coordinate a training/professional development lattice that is linked to identify needs and provides opportunities for sequential, comprehensive, ongoing, structured growth.
- The AECPPDS will work to assist the development of training/professional development opportunities that include field experiences that transfer theoretical understanding in to actual practice in the classroom. Guided field experiences will be completed in State's Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation settings.



- The AECPPDS will promote accessibility of training/professional development opportunities across the state to address the needs of diverse early childhood professionals.
- The AECPPDS will include procedures for providing feedback about trainers and training provided, as well as to promote accountability within the system.
- The AECPPDS will support the training/professional development that is based upon and reflects the AECPPDS Competency Areas.

The professional development opportunities are organized around the Competency Areas. The Competency Areas define what professionals need to know and to do to provide quality early care and education. They serve as the foundation for decisions and practices carried out by professionals in all settings and programs and they establish set of standards for early care and education that support the professionalization of the field. Providers, practitioners and teachers may use Competency areas to assess the level of knowledge and skill and identify specific areas of need for future professional development. Directors and Program Administrators may use the Competency Areas to specify professional development requirements for staff job descriptions, as well as develop staff professional development plans and policies. Professional Organizations may use the Competency Areas to plan and organize the seminars and program sessions. Higher Education faculty, staff and administrators may coordinate and design course content to facilitate transfer and articulation agreements and assess current program content to determine course development. Agencies may use the Competency Areas to develop and implement policies that will enhance professionalism in the field.

The Ten Competency Areas are:

1. Child Growth and Development: Acquiring knowledge and applying principles of growth and development in all areas, including individual differences and cultural influences on development.
2. Creating Caring Communities to Support Learning and Development: Developing safe, healthy environments, which include age appropriate materials and equipment, using positive guidance and appropriate human relation skills.
3. Supporting Learning and Development Through Curriculum Planning and Implementation: Developing and implementing appropriate curriculum, including materials selection, daily planning, and broader curriculum development.
4. Assessment and Evaluation: Utilizing methods to appropriately assess children's development and progress through the curriculum, and methods to evaluate curriculum and programs.
5. Family: Understanding how families function and methods to work with and support families.

6. Community: Understanding how the community and program interact and how to access community resources.
7. Professionalism: Developing the dispositions of professionalism and life long learning, understanding and exhibiting professional behavior.
8. Program Management: Understanding the interactions among the different elements of early care and education programs and developing skills to effectively manage these programs.
9. Communication: Utilizing appropriate oral and written communication skills.
10. General Knowledge: Utilizing accurate information when interacting with children and families.

The AECPPDS Registry is the component that serves to assure the quality of the professional development opportunities. The Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (plan) Registry verifies trainers, approves training, and tracks the training of practitioners. The purpose of the Registry is to insure quality, continuity and accessibility of training for early childhood practitioners in Arkansas.

The Registry Office responsibilities are to review registry applications and determine the applicant's level on the SPECTRUM using the documentation that is mailed with the application. A letter stating the applicant's level on the SPECTRUM is mailed to the applicant.

The Registry Office also reviews applications using an AECPPDS Registry Trainer Review form. This is a documentation page for the review process. If an applicant has provided all necessary documents, he/she will receive a letter stating his/her status as a trainer.

The Registry Office provides the required three-hour Trainer Orientation training for all Registry Trainers.

A Registry Review Committee is organized to review applications that do not clearly meet Registry criteria. This committee reviews applications for which the Registry Office has a conflict of interest. It makes final decisions about the applications in question and documents specific reasons for all decisions.

### **The Practitioner Registry**

Individual early childhood practitioners maintain a record of their professional development experiences through the Practitioner Registry. This record is used to document needed hours for licensing requirements, as well as to help practitioners develop a personal career path in the field of early care and education. The Practitioner Registry recognizes each practitioner's level of achievement on the SPECTRUM: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced.

### **The Trainer Registry**

The Trainer Registry verifies the qualifications of individual trainers to provide training in Arkansas. Verification includes documentation of the trainer's education, training and experience in the Competency Areas or other identified areas of expertise. After each trainer has completed the verification process they attend a three-hour Train-the-Trainers program. In this program the trainer is introduced to presentation skills and techniques. They also are given directions on how to enter the practitioners and training into the Registry database. How to administer the evaluation process and communicate that information to the Registry Office is also covered in the training. Verified trainers must maintain a log of professional development hours and provide them to the Registry Office every three years. (*See ATTACHMENT #28.*)

### **The Training Registry**

The Training Registry is a method for listing all approved training opportunities throughout the state. Information about upcoming training is listed on a Website for the convenience of trainers and practitioners. A Training Registration Form is used to register the name of the training, the trainers, the dates, the target audience, dates and locations. The training registration includes a summary of the training content and identification of the practitioner competency areas addressed in the training. Through the Training Registry, supervisors and trainers are able to identify training topics that are needed and to identify geographical areas of the state that need more opportunities for training.

Non-Registry Training request is used for those professional development opportunities beyond those provided by the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development Registry. This may apply to conferences, seminars, workshops, institutes or retreats. The practitioner, along with an agenda and/or conference program and certificate of attendance submits the form to the Registry Office.

### **Early Language, Literacy, Pre-reading and Numeracy Development**

As noted in the SPECTRUM in the Intermediate Level there is the professional development opportunity for Pre-K Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas Endorsement. Individuals who have been highly trained in the curriculum offer this training statewide.

Pre-K ELLA is a thirty (30) hour professional development opportunity designed for all early education settings, including center-based care, family child care homes, and home educator programs.

The Components of the Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas) training include the following:

- Social and Emotional Development related to Literacy
- Creating Learning Environments that are Literacy Rich and Guide Behavior
- Overview of Language Development - Language Arts
- Promoting Language and Literacy – The Role of Play

- Promoting Language and Literacy – Dramatic Play, Drama and Play Acting
- Promoting Language and Literacy – Read Aloud
- Promoting Language and Literacy – Story Telling
- Promoting Language and Literacy – Poetry, Nursery Rhymes, Finger Plays, Songs
- Reading Experiences – Shared Reading
- Learning about Letters, Sounds and Words
- Environmental Print
- Writing in the Pre-K Balanced Literacy Program
- Assessment, Observation, and Portfolio
- Fostering Children’s Emergent Literacy Development through the Family

A research project is in the process of being developed to evaluate the Pre-K Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas (Pre-K ELLA). This study involves measuring changes in knowledge, attitudes and behaviors of teachers who received the Pre-K ELLA training.

### **Early Learning Guidelines**

Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework (Early Learning Guidelines) is a document that contains the necessary components to shape and guide the design and development of quality early childhood education programs. The Mission of the Framework (Guidelines) in collaboration with family and community is to provide learning opportunities that promote growth of the whole child. In recognition of individual uniqueness, programs should reflect attention to each child’s pattern and timing of growth. A safe, nurturing, interactive environment is essential in order to maximize the potential and individuality of all children.

### **The Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System**

AECPDS is comprehensive, systematic and addresses the individual needs of the adult learners. The AECPDS is in line with the Key Components of the Good Start Grow Smart Initiative.

1. The AECPDS developed the SPECTRUM as the framework from which a comprehensive system supports personnel in maintaining and expanding skills and knowledge through learning opportunities linked to licensure, credentialing, or certification.
2. Learning opportunities and activities are made available to meet the practitioners’ need for scheduling, topics and settings and provide learning environments and methods that are conducive to adult learners.
3. Continued support and follow-up after initial training activities are implemented into Pre-K Early Literacy and Learning in Arkansas, CDA instruction, Apprenticeship and the Mentor Endorsement program to mention a few. These programs have and provide adult learners the ability to gain support to improve skills and competencies and increase knowledge of content, while providing a supportive environment for applying new content/ideas to practice.

4. The accomplishment of the desired outcomes of the AECPPDS evaluation plans is in the planning stages. The plan will incorporate various levels and types of evaluations involving all levels of participants and components of the system.
5. The activities across and within the professional development opportunities are sequenced from initial knowledge acquisition, to guided/supported application, to independent application of knowledge and skills/change of practice.
6. Learning opportunities are available for practitioners to explore cultural and linguistic diversity in order to understand and promote effective connections and communications with the diverse families and children they work with.
7. The Trainer Registry ensures that trainer providers have a strong knowledge base and the ability to deliver content in effective, practical ways using a variety of techniques to meet the diverse learner needs and provide for personal growth. This is accomplished by providing a three-hour Train-the-Trainers workshop.
8. Learning opportunities are built on previous knowledge and experience, and incorporate application strategies, opportunities for problem solving, reflection and critical thinking. These opportunities are provided by allowing learners to work in small groups, keep journals of their experiences as they incorporate their new ideas and given opportunities to share with mentors as they begin to determine solutions to the problems they encounter in the daily operations of their work.
9. Many of the Arkansas practitioners in the Early Care and Education Profession are seeing themselves as lifelong learners after they have experienced the enhancement of their own practice.

The AECPPDS offers scholarships to students who attend CDA approved institutions of higher learning. AECPPDS maintains a close working relationship with Arkansas Workforce Education and Department of Labor Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training.

The Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework (early learning guidelines) is listed in the SPECTRUM as the Child Care Curriculum Endorsement. It consists of the following courses: The Child from Birth to Three: Framework, Assessment and Activities; The Child from Three to Five: Framework, Assessment and Activities; The Child from Five to Twelve: School Age Activities; Family Child Care and Understanding Children and Their Behavior. Each class has three sections consisting of 15 clock hours (45 clock hours or three credit hours.) (135 clock hours or 9 credit hours.)

The Framework (guidelines) also includes a Developmental Rating Scale.

Some of the CDA Approved institutions of higher learning incorporate the Framework (guidelines) into course content. The Framework contains both curriculum and child assessment. The Framework aligns with K-12 Framework in Arkansas and the Head Start Performance Standards Outcomes.

Early childhood programs across the state including Head Start, Early Head Start are using the Framework (I/T, Early Childhood) as foundation for developing their curriculum.

The Framework (guidelines) has *Family Connections* and *Picture This* Booklet for I/T and Early Childhood.

The Arkansas Early Childhood Education Framework (early learning guideline) is listed in the SPECTRUM as the Child Care Curriculum Endorsement. It consists of the following courses:

1. The Child from Birth to Three: Framework, Assessment and Activities;
2. The Child from Three to Five: Framework, Assessment and Activities;
3. The Child from Five to Twelve: School Age Activities;
4. Family Child Care; and
5. Understanding Children and Their Behavior.

Each class has three sections consisting of fifteen (15) clock hours for a total of forty-five (45) clock hours or three (3) credit hours. (135 clock hours or 9 credit hours.)

The Framework/Early Learning Guidelines include a Developmental Rating Scale to be used in determine a child's "readiness" in relation to specific benchmarks appropriate for a child's development stage/age. The rating scale addresses three levels of readiness: not yet; emerging and consistently.

Some of the CDA Approved institutions of higher learning incorporate the Framework (guidelines) into course content. The Framework contains both curriculum and child assessment. The Framework is aligned with State Department of Education K-12 Framework; the Head Start Performance Outcomes and Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPI).

Early childhood programs across the state including Head Start, Early Head Start and numerous community based programs are using the Framework (I/T, Early Childhood) as a foundation for developing their curriculum.

Are program or provider-level incentives offered to encourage provider training and education?

☒ Yes. Describe, including any connections between the incentives and training relating to early language, literacy, pre-reading and early math concepts.

☐ No. If no, is there any plan to offer incentives to encourage provider training and education?

### **Program or Provider Incentives**

The Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System Spectrum contains training and educational opportunities for early care professionals in the State. These courses and classes are directly linked to core competencies, which include early language and literacy development,

pre-reading and numeracy skills. At least ninety percent of all courses and training opportunities offer either CEU or College Credit for completion.

Scholarships are available for staff to participate in CDA (Child Development Associate) coursework. The CDA instructors in Arkansas utilize the Arkansas Early Childhood Curriculum Framework in their classes, to reinforce the use of early learning guidelines with students. The Child Care Apprenticeship Program incorporates CDA as a portion of the apprenticeship work.

The Core Quality Component Model used with the Arkansas Better Chance Programs ensures quality components with higher standards in five major areas: low student to teacher ratio/well compensated staff; professional development; developmental screening; meaningful parent and community engagement activities, and proven curricula and learning processes. Increased funding to support these components is made available to these programs. Each program implements literacy, numeracy and language development activities as they use the Arkansas Early Childhood Curriculum Framework to develop program outcomes.

A definite benefit of participation in Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas) is the participant kit which includes children's books and curriculum guides totaling over \$200 per participant.

Programs that meet the Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation standards are eligible for an Incentive Grant annually. The amount is based on the number of children in the program with a minimum of \$700 for small family child care homes and a maximum of \$2000 for large centers.

Recognition events are held throughout the year to honor early care professionals who have completed differing levels of training and education through the many levels in the Spectrum.

What are the expected **outcomes** of the State's professional development plan and efforts to improve the skills of child care providers? As applicable, how does (or will) the State assess the effectiveness of its plan and efforts? If so, how does (or will) the State use assessment to help shape its professional development plan and training/education for child care providers?

## **Outcomes**

The Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development Registry has 4,430 practitioners currently registered. Of these:

- 86% are at a basic level
- 9% intermediate
- 5% are registered at an advanced level

The trainer registry includes 603 trainers:

- 9% are listed as provisional
- 3% listed as basic

- 3% Intermediate
- 36% advanced
- 49% specialized

Evaluations on all training sessions are submitted to the registry by the trainers and used to assess the effectiveness of sessions in meeting the identified needs of practitioners.

Benchmarking this baseline data allows for continuous improvement in the professional development system.

A Request for Proposal (RFP) was issued in December of 2002, in an attempt to enter into a contract for an evaluation of the Professional Development System to include the training and education opportunities and to determine the effectiveness of the courses and classes available to the early care profession. No applicant was selected from this advertisement. The Division reissued the RFP and contract for this evaluative study of the entire Professional Development System and selected Keystone.

Through the Department of Human Services Annual Report specific benchmarks in the area of training are recorded on an annual basis. These benchmarks track numbers of participants and completers in numerous areas of professional development. The Professional Development Registry is another source for determining participant and completion rates for all training opportunities, as all trainers/instructors provide information to the registry to update the practitioners' records.

All professional development contracts for delivery of training and education opportunities include performance-based guidelines. Each contractor must ensure that all trainers/teachers are registered with the Arkansas Professional Development Registry as an instructor/trainer. Evaluations from participants are maintained at the registry and used to conduct an annual evaluation of the effectiveness of the trainer/instructors.

### **Arkansas Early Childhood Commission**

Coordination and collaboration are key factors in all planning and program implementation in Arkansas. The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission is the responsible entity for ensuring this coordination. The Commission is a governor-appointed group responsible for:

1. Advising the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education on the administration of the Arkansas Child Care Facilities Loan Guarantee Trust Fund;
2. Providing technical assistance in the design of training programs to enhance the skills of professionals in early childhood programs, including the development of an annual comprehensive training plan for providers;
3. Examining the recommendations of national and regional groups and systems producing scientifically proven and cost-effective results used by others to provide child care and early childhood services;



4. Assisting in the development of a comprehensive long-range plan for the expansion, development and implementation of early childhood programs in Arkansas, including recommending the allocation and expenditures of funds appropriated to the Arkansas Better Chance Program;
5. Facilitating coordination and communication among state agencies providing early childhood programs in order to promote non-duplication and coordination of services in such programs and recommending a structure for the administration of the currently existing programs and the recommended programs;
6. Advising the Department of Education and other appropriate state agencies on the development of programmatic standards for early childhood education programs to be funded with funds appropriated to the department or to such other state agencies as may receive appropriations for such purposes;
7. Promoting strong local community support for early childhood education programs;
8. Promoting public awareness of childcare and early childhood programs;
9. From the applications submitted, making Child Care Appeal Review Panel selections from persons who meet the qualifications for service and who exhibit a willingness and time commitment to serve on the panel; and
10. Approving all rules and regulations promulgated by the Division.

The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission is composed of eighteen (18) members. The Governor, subject to confirmation by the Senate, shall appoint the following members of the commission:

- Three (3) members affiliated with childcare provider agencies, organizations and programs;
- One (1) member affiliated with a Head Start program;
- One (1) member affiliated with a Home Instruction Program;
- One (1) member employed as an administrator by a public school district;
- One (1) member employed by a public school district as a teacher with early childhood responsibilities;
- The Director of the Department of Health or his or her designee;
- One (1) member trained as an early childhood education professional;
- One (1) member who is a parent of a child who attends a child care program;
- The Director of the Department of Workforce Education or its successor or his or her designee;
- The Director of the Department of Education or his or her designee; and
- Two (2) members representing the business community who have an interest in early childhood education.

One (1) member shall be appointed by and service at the pleasure of the chair of the Subcommittee on Children and Youth of the House Committee on Aging, Children and Youth, Legislative and Military Affairs. One (1) member shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the chair of the Senate Committee on Children and Youth. One (1) member shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the chair of the House Committee on Education. One (1) member shall be appointed by and serve at the pleasure of the chair of the Senate Committee of Education.

The commission shall report annually to the House Committee on Education and Senate Committee on Education.

### **The Arkansas Better Chance Program**

The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program is the state funded early care and education intervention program that is designed to serve children at risk of school failure. Programs are either center-based or home-based. Children must meet eligibility criteria and be between the ages of birth to school entry to receive services.

ABC programs must provide a 40% local match for participation. The matching funds come from a wide variety of programs such as:

- Head Start,
- Early Head Start,
- Local School Districts,
- Even Start programs,
- Title I funding,
- Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
- Early Childhood Special Education Services (Part C)
- Early Intervention Services (Part H),
- Child Care and Adult Feeding Program (CCAFP);
- Children's Health Management Services (CHMS);
- Poverty Index funding and
- Private Foundation funds.

The Arkansas Legislature established the ABC Program with Act 212 in 1991. The ABC Task Force, comprised of 36 members representing a diversity of early childhood interests, convened in August 2001 to tackle quality issues. The "Core Quality Component Model" was the product of this effort. Higher standards in five major areas are addressed: low student to teacher ratio/well compensated staff; professional development; developmental screening; meaningful parent and community engagement activities, and; proven curricula and learning processes. The standards recommended by the Task Force have now been approved by the State Board of Education, and are currently being implemented in programs statewide.

### **Coordination in Early Literacy Initiatives**

The Arkansas Department of Education/Early Childhood Special Education, Even Start, Title I, Local Districts, the Arkansas Department of Higher Education, the DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, and the Head Start Collaboration Project joined together to develop a training program that addresses the issue of pre-literacy skills. What emerged was the *Pre-K Early Learning Literacy in Arkansas Initiative* (Pre K-Ella). This is a comprehensive, five-day training designed for all early education settings, including center-based care, family child care homes, and professionals working with parents in the *Home Instruction for Parents of Pre-school Youngsters* (HIPPY) program. The joint efforts of all concerned resulted in this 30-hour comprehensive training being delivered free of charge all across the state, through the support of Arkansas universities, community colleges and technical institutes.

The training includes the following components:

- Social and Emotional Development related to Literacy
- Creating Learning Environments that are Literacy Rich and Guide Behavior
- Overview of Language Development – Language Arts
- Promoting Language and Literacy
  - The Role of Play
  - Dramatic Play, Drama and Play Acting
  - Read Aloud
  - Storytelling
  - Poetry, Nursery Rhymes, Finger Plays, Songs
- Reading Experiences – Shared Reading
- Learning about Letters, Sounds and Words
- Environmental Print
- Writing in the Pre-K Balanced Literacy Program
- Assessment, Observation, and Portfolio
- Fostering Children’s Emergent Literacy Development through the Family

This collaboration also produced a comprehensive evaluation that studied the comparison of teacher behavior and classroom environment in pre- and post- training settings. The data from this evaluation will be available in July 2003, and will be used to redefine any elements of the training that are deemed necessary.

State Collaborative Planning Committee Formed to Improve Family and Child Indicators with an Improvement Plan that Requires Collaboration in the Early Care and Education System.

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families serve as joint administrators of the Arkansas team for The School Readiness Indicators Initiative. This is a multi-state initiative that uses child well-being indicators to build a change agenda in states and local communities in order to improve school readiness and ensure early school success. The task of participating states is to develop a set of child outcomes and systems indicators for children from birth through eight years of age. Indicators are clustered in age sets: 0-3, 3-5 and 5-8. The Arkansas team is one of 17 state teams that work individually and as a group to develop a comprehensive set of measures to monitor school readiness and service system outcomes for children and families. Indicators fall within the categories of K-3 Education/Readiness for School, 0-5 Education, Child Outcomes,

Community, Family, Economic Well-Being, Healthy, and Safety. This collaboration will provide information and benchmarks to help guide other state efforts in the area of school readiness. The statewide report and a county by county report are located on the division web site.

The Department of Education will manage a pilot project in the fall of 2003 that will implement new and more uniform assessment measures for children entering kindergarten, based on the work of the School Readiness Indicators Initiative, the Early Childhood Education Frameworks, Head Start performance standards, and Pre-K ELLA (Early Literacy Learning in Arkansas). Representatives from Head Start, Arkansas Better Chance, Even Start, DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, the Department of Education, and private child care providers all worked together to agree upon assessment standards for this project. The project will be implemented statewide in the fall of 2004.

### **Comprehensive Early Care and Education Professional Development System**

The Arkansas Head Start Collaboration Project was awarded a grant from the Head Start Bureau in 1997 and began to seek ways to improve the knowledge and skills of early childhood educators in all developmental domains in order to strengthen early learning for young children in Arkansas. They formed a partnership with the Department of Human Services Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and organized a Staff Development Work Group that consisted of thirty representatives from institutions of higher education, Head Start grantees, community child care programs, and education service cooperative early childhood programs. Meetings of this group centered on identification of the need for consistency and continuity across the many training opportunities offered to those working in the field of early education and care. Key points of discussion included availability of training opportunities; the need for a state registry; linkage of advanced training experiences to benefits, and; the need for involvement of professional associations. It was soon apparent that collaboration among all stakeholders would be crucial in order to realize the goal of a comprehensive system of professional development for the diverse field of early education and care. The work of this group resulted in the formation of the Arkansas Early Childhood Professional Development System (AECPDS). This system is currently managed by Professional Development Steering Committee, whose purpose is to provide early childhood professionals in Arkansas access to a coordinated professional development system based upon current research and best practice. The system contains high quality training experiences and allows for the development of career pathways to meet diverse needs of individuals. The Spectrum (Career Lattice) details ten levels of career development based on training, education, experience in the field and professional activity; and plans a course for any individual that wishes to grow and set professional goals. Ten competency areas are identified for training purposes: child growth and development; creating caring communities to support learning and development; supporting learning and development through curriculum planning and implementation; assessment and evaluation; family; community; professionalism; program management; communication, and; general knowledge. Individual early childhood practitioners use the Practitioner Registry in order to accumulate a record of all training experiences they complete during their career. This facilitates the process for practitioners to identify career opportunities and develop personal career paths. The Training Registry is a system of tracking all verified statewide training, and makes current information

readily available on the Division web-site. The AECPPDS also maintains an up to date Trainer Registry, which verifies the qualifications of individual trainers to provide training in Arkansas. Verification includes documentation of the trainer's education, training and experience in identified areas of expertise. All trainers for programs sponsored by the AECPPDS must meet qualifications that are consistent with or above the training qualifications set out by the Trainer Registry.

### **Mental Health Services Provided to Families with Young Children in Child Care, Head Start and Pre-Kindergarten, with Support to Teachers in Early Care and Education Settings**

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education and the Head Start Collaboration Project joined together in September of 2002 to launch an ad hoc interagency initiative to stimulate greater collaboration and strategic planning for early childhood mental health issues. Other representatives in the Mental Health Initiative include the DHS Division of Mental Health and local Community Mental Health Centers (CMHC's); the Departments of Psychiatry and Pediatrics of the College of Medicine of the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences; the Starting Early, Starting Smart (SESS)-funded provider, Child Development, Inc.; the Arkansas Department of Education; the Arkansas Department of Health, and; private child care and mental health care providers. The group voiced a consensus that on-site assistance by mental health professionals with specialized expertise in early childhood mental health would be the most practical way to thoroughly integrate child development, educational, and medical services for young children and families at risk of social-emotional problems. The pilot project is funded by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education, and will provide on-site assistance and professional development to selected early childhood care and education providers. The design will be completed and sites selected by the fall of 2003.

The Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education (DCCECE), through the Child Care Development Fund, is sponsoring the University of Central Arkansas Department of Early Childhood Special Education in the development of a forty (40) hour training series in social and emotional development. First, a comprehensive training guide will be developed (during the summer and fall of 2003) with approximately twelve (12) training modules designed to increase the early childhood professional's skills in promoting the overall social and emotional development of young children. The instructional training plan will then be developed to organize the presentation of the training modules. Three training sessions will be conducted beginning in the spring of 2004 and end in the spring of 2005. At the conclusion of the training, follow-up consultations will be provided for participants. A continuous evaluation process will accompany the project, using formative and summative analysis of each phase of the training. Participants from interested preschools and day care centers in Faulkner County, Even Start, the University of Central Arkansas Child Study Center, and all CAPCA Head Start Centers representing Cleburne, White, and Faulkner counties will have an opportunity to participate in the training. Collaboration is crucial to the success of the project. Professional development "sites" will be established where best practice is supported and displayed for participants to visit, reflect on best practices, and respond through telephone conversations, e-mail correspondence, CHAT room dialogue, and/or personal discussions. The training team has strong background experiences working with partnerships through local schools, CAPCA Head Start Centers, and

the UCA Child Study Center. After the project is developed and tested, the design will be analyzed and refined in order to make the program available statewide.

### **Universal Pre-Kindergarten Implemented Collaboratively in School, Head Start and Child Care Settings with Common Quality Standards**

The Arkansas Better Chance (ABC) Program is the state funded early care and education intervention program that is designed to serve children at risk of school failure. Programs are either center-based or home-based. Children must meet eligibility criteria and be between the ages of birth to school entry to receive services. The Arkansas Legislature established the ABC Program with Act 212 in 1991. The ABC Task Force, comprised of 36 members representing a diversity of early childhood interests, convened in August 2001 to establish an annual reimbursement rate for quality care based on required components. The “Core Quality Component Model” was the product of this effort. Higher standards in five major areas are addressed: low student to teacher ratio/well compensated staff; professional development; developmental screening; meaningful parent and community engagement activities, and proven curricula and learning processes. The standards recommended by the Task Force were approved by the State Board of Education in February of 2002, and are currently being utilized in programs statewide.

### **Tiered Child Care Licensing System with Quality Standards that are Established and/or Applied Collaboratively**

The Arkansas Early Childhood Commission (Governor appointed statutory children’s cabinet) and the State Board of Education appointed a work group to review and revise the Early Childhood Quality Approval/Accreditation standards for early childhood programs in Arkansas. This group includes representatives from Head Start, the Department of Education, the Department of Health, and DHS Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. Quality Approval standards have been in place since 1993 and are currently in the process of a ten-year review and revision. The revision reflects the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, the Framework Developmental Rating Scale and the “Core Quality Component Model” approved by the State Board of Education.

Coordination and collaboration are the key factors in all efforts supported by the Division of Child Care and Early Childhood Education. Numerous projects and grants previously noted in the Child Care Development Fund State Plan support these continued partnership efforts. The only change the state will propose during this state plan period will be increasing coordination efforts in the area of financing and funding of early care and education programs.

Submission in March of 2003 of a Maternal and Child Health Grant for Systems Development in Early Care and Education will support the work solidifying the early care and education framework across many state agencies, private and public providers of service. The Division developed and will serve as the program agency for the MCH Early Childhood Systems planning grant. The Arkansas Department of Health will serve as Fiscal Agent. This is two-year planning grant that will result in a ten-year implementation process to improve comprehensive services to

children and families in Arkansas by: increasing access to medical homes; focusing on better mental health and social emotional development; supporting high quality child care and early childhood education and providing increased parent education and family support services.

Expected outcomes:

A comprehensive evaluation of the EC Professional Development System will begin in July of 2005. This evaluation is being conducted by Keystone University Research Corporation and will be concluded within an 18 timeframe. Recommendations from, this comprehensive evaluation will be used to revise the system.

## PART 6 - HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVIDERS

*(Only the 50 States and the District of Columbia complete Part 6.)*

The National Resource Center for Health and Safety in Child Care (NRCHSCC) of DHHS's Maternal and Child Health Bureau supports a comprehensive, current, on-line listing of the licensing and regulatory requirements for child care in the 50 States and the District of Columbia. In lieu of requiring a State Lead Agency to provide information that is already publicly available, ACF accepts this compilation as accurately reflecting the States' licensing requirements. The listing, which is maintained by the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center School of Nursing, is available on the World Wide Web at: <http://nrc.uchsc.edu/>.

### **6.1 Health and Safety Requirements for Center-Based Providers**

(658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, §98.16(j))

6.1.1 Are all center-based providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation?

☒

Yes. Answer 6.1.2, skip 6.1.3, and go to 6.2.

☐

No. Describe which center-based providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.1.2 and 6.1.3.

6.1.2 Have center licensing requirements as relates to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since approval of the last State Plan?  
(§98.41(a)(2)&(3))

☐

Yes, and the changes are as follows:

☒

No.

6.1.3 For center-based care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training



## **6.2 Health and Safety Requirements for Group Home Providers**

(658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.2.1 Are all group home providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? If:

- ☒ Yes. Answer 6.2.2, skip 6.2.3, and go to 6.3.  
☐ No. Describe which group home providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.2.2 and 6.2.3.

6.2.2 Have group home licensing requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

- ☐ Yes, and the changes are as follows:  
☒ No.

6.2.3 For group home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

## **6.3 Health and Safety Requirements for Family Providers** (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.3.1 Are all family child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under State law that is indicated in the NRCHSCC's compilation? If:

- ☒ Yes. Answer 6.3.2, skip 6.3.3, and go to 6.4.  
☐ No. Describe which family child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.3.2 and 6.3.3.

6.3.2 Have family child care provider requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or staff training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

☐ Yes, and the changes are as follows:

☒ No.

6.3.3 For family care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

#### **6.4 Health and Safety Requirements for In-Home Providers** (658E(c)(2)(F), §§98.41, 98.16(j))

6.4.1 Are all in-home child care providers paid with CCDF funds subject to licensing under the State law reflected in the NRCHSCC's compilation referenced above?

☒ Yes. Answer 6.4.2, skip 6.4.3, and go to 6.5.

☐ No. Describe which in-home child care providers are exempt from licensing under State law and answer 6.4.2 and 6.4.3.

6.4.2 Have in-home health and safety requirements that relate to staff-child ratios, group size, or training been modified since the approval of the last State Plan? (§98.41(a)(2) & (3))

☐ Yes, and the changes are as follows:

☒ No.

6.4.3 For in-home care that is NOT licensed, and therefore not reflected in NRCHSCC's compilation, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

## **6.5 Exemptions to Health and Safety Requirements**

At Lead Agency option, the following relatives: grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings (who live in a separate residence from the child in care) may be exempted from health and safety requirements. (658P(4)(B), §98.41(a)(1)(ii)(A))

Indicate the Lead Agency's policy regarding these relative providers:

- ☒ **All** relative providers are subject to the same requirements as described in sections 6.1 - 6.4 above, as appropriate; there are **no exemptions** for relatives or different requirements for them.
- ☐ **All** relative providers are **exempt** from all health and safety requirements.
- ☐ **Some or all** relative providers are subject to different health and safety requirements from those described in sections 6.1 - 6.4. The following describes those requirements and identifies the relatives they apply to:

## **6.6 Enforcement of Health and Safety Requirements**

Each Lead Agency is required to certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided comply with all applicable health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(E), §§98.40(a)(2), 98.41(d)) The following is a description of how health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

- Are child care providers subject to routine unannounced visits (i.e., not specifically for the purpose of complaint investigation or issuance/renewal of a license)?

☒ Yes, and the following indicates the providers subject to routine unannounced visits and the frequency of those visits:

☐ No.

All licensed and registered providers receive a minimum of three unannounced monitor visits per year.

- Are child care providers subject to background checks?  
☒ Yes, and the following types of providers are subject to background checks (indicate when such checks are conducted):

☐ No.

All licensed and registered providers are subject to background check requirements. Criminal history checks are mandated every five years, Central Registry maltreatment checks are mandated every two years. FBI checks are required for all owner/operators of licensed care and on any employee who has not resided in the state for the previous six years.

- Does the State require that child care providers report serious injuries that occur while a child is in care? ( Serious injuries are defined as injuries requiring medical treatment by a doctor, nurse, dentist, or other medical professional.)  
☒ Yes, and the following describes the State's reporting requirements and how such injuries are tracked (if applicable):

☐ No.

Providers are required to document all serious injuries and to notify parents immediately. These documents must be maintained and licensing notified within one business day.

Other methods used to ensure that health and safety requirements are effectively enforced: **All essential standards, including health and safety requirements, are reviewed at each monitor visit and compliance documented. We require annual fire and health approval for centers and for homes keeping over 10 children. Zoning is also required for all centers.**

## **6.7 Exemptions from Immunization Requirements**

The State assures that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendations for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))

The State exempts the following children from immunization (check all that apply):

- ☐ Children who are cared for by relatives (defined as grandparents, great grandparents, siblings (if living in a separate residence), aunts and uncles).
- ☐ Children who receive care in their own homes.
- ☒ Children whose parents object to immunization on religious grounds.
- ☒ Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization.

**PART 7**  
**HEALTH AND SAFETY REQUIREMENTS IN THE TERRITORIES**

*(Only the Territories complete Part 7.)*

**7.1 Health and Safety Requirements for Center-Based Providers in the Territories**  
(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all center-based care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

**7.2 Health and Safety Requirements for Group Home Providers in the Territories**  
(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all group home care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

### **7.3 Health and Safety Requirements for Family Providers in the Territories**

(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all family child care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

### **7.4 Health and Safety Requirements for In-Home Providers in the Territories**

(658E(c)(2)(F), §98.41(a), §98.16(j))

For all in-home care, the following health and safety requirements apply to child care services provided under the CCDF for:

- The prevention and control of infectious disease (including age-appropriate immunizations)
- Building and physical premises safety
- Health and safety training

### **7.5 Exemptions to Territorial Health and Safety Requirements**

At Lead Agency option, the following relatives may be exempted from health and safety requirements: grandparents, great grandparents, aunts, uncles, or siblings (who live in a

separate residence from the child in care). (658P(4)(B), §98.41(a)(1)(ii)(A)). Indicate the Lead Agency's policy regarding these relative providers:

- ☐ All relative providers are subject to the same requirements as described in sections 7.1 - 7.4 above, as appropriate; there are **no exemptions** for relatives or different requirements for them.
- ☐ All relative providers are **exempt** from all health and safety requirements.
- ☐ **Some or all** relative providers are subject to **different** health and safety requirements from those described in sections 7.1 - 7.4 and the following describes those different requirements and the relatives they apply to:

## **7.6 Enforcement of Territorial Health and Safety Requirements**

Each Lead Agency is required to certify that procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided comply with all applicable health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(E), §§98.40(a)(2), 98.41(d)) The following is a description of how Territorial health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

Are child care providers subject to routine unannounced visits (i.e., not specifically for the purpose of complaint investigation or issuance/renewal of a license)?

- ☐ Yes, and the following indicates the providers subject to routine unannounced visits and the frequency of those visits:
- ☐ No.

Are child care providers subject to background checks?

- ☐ Yes, and the following types of providers are subject to background checks (indicate when such checks are conducted):
- ☐ No.

Does the Territory require that child care providers report serious injuries that occur while a child is in care? ( Serious injuries are defined as injuries requiring medical treatment by a doctor, nurse, dentist, or other medical professional.)

- ☐ Yes, and the following describes the Territory's reporting requirements and how such injuries are tracked (if applicable):
- ☐ No.

Other methods used to ensure that health and safety requirements are effectively enforced:

## **7.7 Exemptions from Territorial Immunization Requirements**

The Territory assures that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding

immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendations for childhood immunizations of the Territorial public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))

The Territory exempts the following children from immunization (check all that apply):

- ☐ Children who are cared for by relatives (defined as grandparents, great grandparents, siblings (if living in a separate residence), aunts and uncles).
- ☐ Children who receive care in their own homes.
- ☐ Children whose parents object to immunization on religious grounds.
- ☐ Children whose medical condition contraindicates immunization.



**APPENDIX 1**  
**PROGRAM ASSURANCES AND CERTIFICATIONS**

The Lead Agency, named in Part 1 of this Plan, assures that:

- (1) upon approval, it will have in effect a program that complies with the provisions of the Plan printed herein, and is administered in accordance with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990 as amended, Section 418 of the Social Security Act, and all other applicable Federal laws and regulations. (658D(b), 658E(a))
- (2) the parent(s) of each eligible child within the State who receives or is offered child care services for which financial assistance is provided is given the option either to enroll such child with a child care provider that has a grant or contract for the provision of the service; or to receive a child care certificate. (658E(c)(2)(A)(i))
- (3) in cases in which the parent(s) elects to enroll the child with a provider that has a grant or contract with the Lead Agency, the child will be enrolled with the eligible provider selected by the parent to the maximum extent practicable. (658E(c)(2)(A)(ii))
- (4) the child care certificate offered to parents shall be of a value commensurate with the subsidy value of child care services provided under a grant or contract. (658E(c)(2)(A)(iii))
- (5) with respect to State and local regulatory requirements, health and safety requirements, payment rates, and registration requirements, State or local rules, procedures or other requirements promulgated for the purpose of the Child Care and Development Fund will not significantly restrict parental choice among categories of care or types of providers. (658E(c)(2)(A), §98.15(p), §98.30(g), §98.40(b)(2), §98.41(b), §98.43(c), §98.45(d))
- (6) that children receiving services under the CCDF are age-appropriately immunized, and that the health and safety provisions regarding immunizations incorporate (by reference or otherwise) the latest recommendation for childhood immunizations of the State public health agency. (§98.41(a)(1))
- (7) that CCDF Discretionary funds are used to supplement, not supplant, State general revenue funds for child care assistance for low-income families. (P.L. 106-554)

The Lead Agency also certifies that:

- (1) it has procedures in place to ensure that providers of child care services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund afford parents unlimited access to their children and to the providers caring for their children during the normal hours of operations and whenever such children are in the care of such providers. (658E(c)(2)(B))
- (2) it maintains a record of substantiated parental complaints and makes information regarding such complaints available to the public on request. (658E(c)(2)(C))
- (3) it will collect and disseminate to parents of eligible children and the general public, consumer education information that will promote informed child care choices. (658E(c)(2)(D))
- (4) it has in effect licensing requirements applicable to child care services provided in the State. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (5) there are in effect within the State (or other area served by the Lead Agency), under State or local law, requirements designed to protect the health and safety of children; these requirements are applicable to child care providers that provide services for which assistance is made available under the Child Care and Development Fund. (658E(c)(2)(E))
- (6) procedures are in effect to ensure that child care providers of services for which assistance is provided under the Child Care and Development Fund comply with all applicable State or local health and safety requirements. (658E(c)(2)(G))
- (7) payment rates under the Child Care and Development Fund for the provision of child care services are sufficient to ensure equal access for eligible children to comparable child care services in the State or sub-State area that are provided to children whose parents are not eligible to receive assistance under this program or under any other Federal or State child care assistance programs. (658E(c)(4)(A))

## APPENDIX 2 ELIGIBILITY AND PRIORITY TERMINOLOGY

For purposes of determining eligibility and priority for CCDF-funded child care services, lead agencies must define the following *italicized* terms. (658P, 658E(c)(3)(B))

- (1) *Attending* (a job training or educational program; include minimum hours if applicable) - Officially enrolled in and participating in the program. Parents must currently be enrolled a minimum of twelve (12) credit hours to be eligible for assistance.
- (2) *In Loco Parentis* - A person having physical custody of the child. The person has assumed guardianship and responsibility for the child. Child care can be provided for this person to enable employment training, or education; however the income of that person (regardless of relationship to the child) will be counted in determining eligibility and setting fees for service.
- (3) *Job Training and Educational Program* - Activities designed to enhance the employability and self-sufficiency of parents and which lead to employment at the end of the training, education program.
- (4) *Physical or Mental Incapacity* (if the Lead Agency provides such services to children age 13 and older) - A child who has a physical or mental condition which substantially limits one or more major life activities, who has a record of such an impairment, or who is regarded as having such an impairment, or and diagnosed by a licensed medical or psychological practitioner.
- (5) *Protective Services* - Protective Services are not paid with CCDF Funds.
- (6) *Residing With* - Living with or in a household with a parent or legal guardian or other individual standing in loco parentis.
- (7) *Special Needs Child* - A child whose physical condition has lasted or is expected to last at least two (2) years as diagnosed by a licensed medical or psychological practitioner.
- (8) *Very Low Income* - An income that is at or below 40% of the 2003 State Median Income Scale. Families whose monthly income is at this level would not be required to pay a fee for child care services based on the sliding fee scale.
- (9) *Working* (include minimum hours if applicable) - To do work, to be employed and to receive payment for the work either by cash or in-kind. Child care services accommodate the normal work schedule of the parent including travel time. Parents must be employed a minimum of thirty-two (32) hours per week in order to be eligible for child care assistance.
- (10) Additional terminology related to conditions of eligibility or priority established by the Lead Agency:

- a. **Teen parent** - Any person 17 years or younger who is the parent of a child who lives with that parent. The teen parent must live with a responsible adult, such as their parent, a spouse, or be declared an emancipated minor.
- b. **Homeless** - Any person who is living in a homeless or battered women's shelter or who is transitioning out of a shelter, who meets the eligibility requirements and has a child in need of child care services.
- c. **Low Income/No Fee** - The total household income received does not require the parent/guardian to pay a fee.
- d. **Low Income with a Fee** - The total household income received requires that the family pay a portion of the fee charged by the child care facility. Families who pay a fee do not receive child care assistance until all families on the waiting list who would not pay a fee are served.

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